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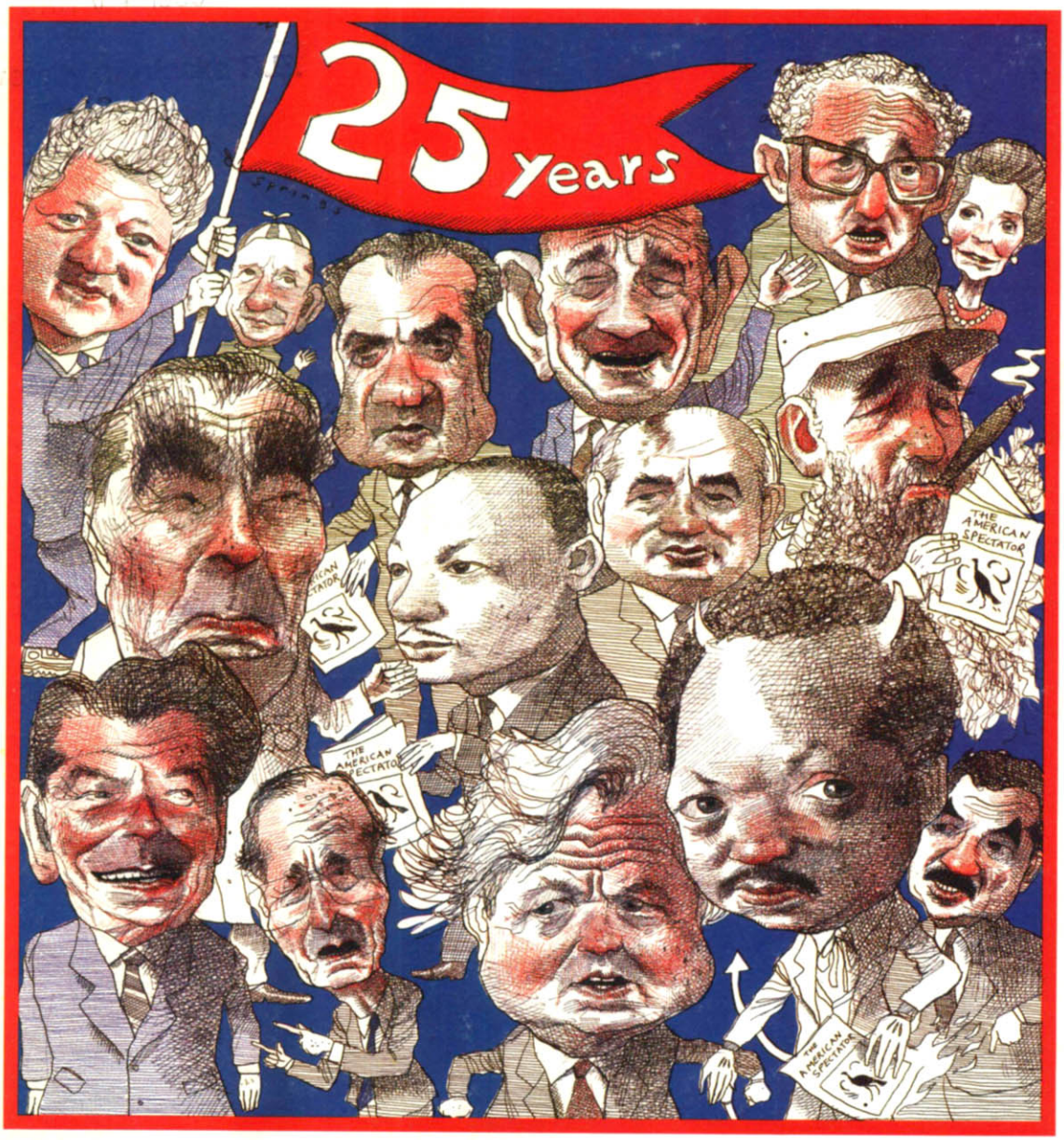
JANUARY 1993

A MONTHLY REVIEW EDITED BY R. EMMETT TYRRELL, JR.



. . . And Life After Bush

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HENRY V AND AIR SUPERIORITY

In 1415, Henry V, while defending his claim to hereditary English lands, was blocked by a mighty French host near the small chateau of Agincourt.

The English "band of brothers," outnumbered over four to one, made a defensive position by anchoring each flank on dense woods and preparing the ground to their front with sharpened stakes.

Expecting an easy victory, 25,000 French knights thundered down upon the English, intending to sweep aside what they considered a mere rabble of some 5,000 archers and then dispatch the 900 English knights. The "rabble," however, loosed a storm of armor-piercing arrows on the attackers; stopping the attack cold. The English, virtually untouched, were able to move out and apply the *coup de grace*.

Those English bowmen kept themselves and their knights safe; exactly as today's modern air superiority fighter controls the skies so the battle can be won on the ground and at sea.

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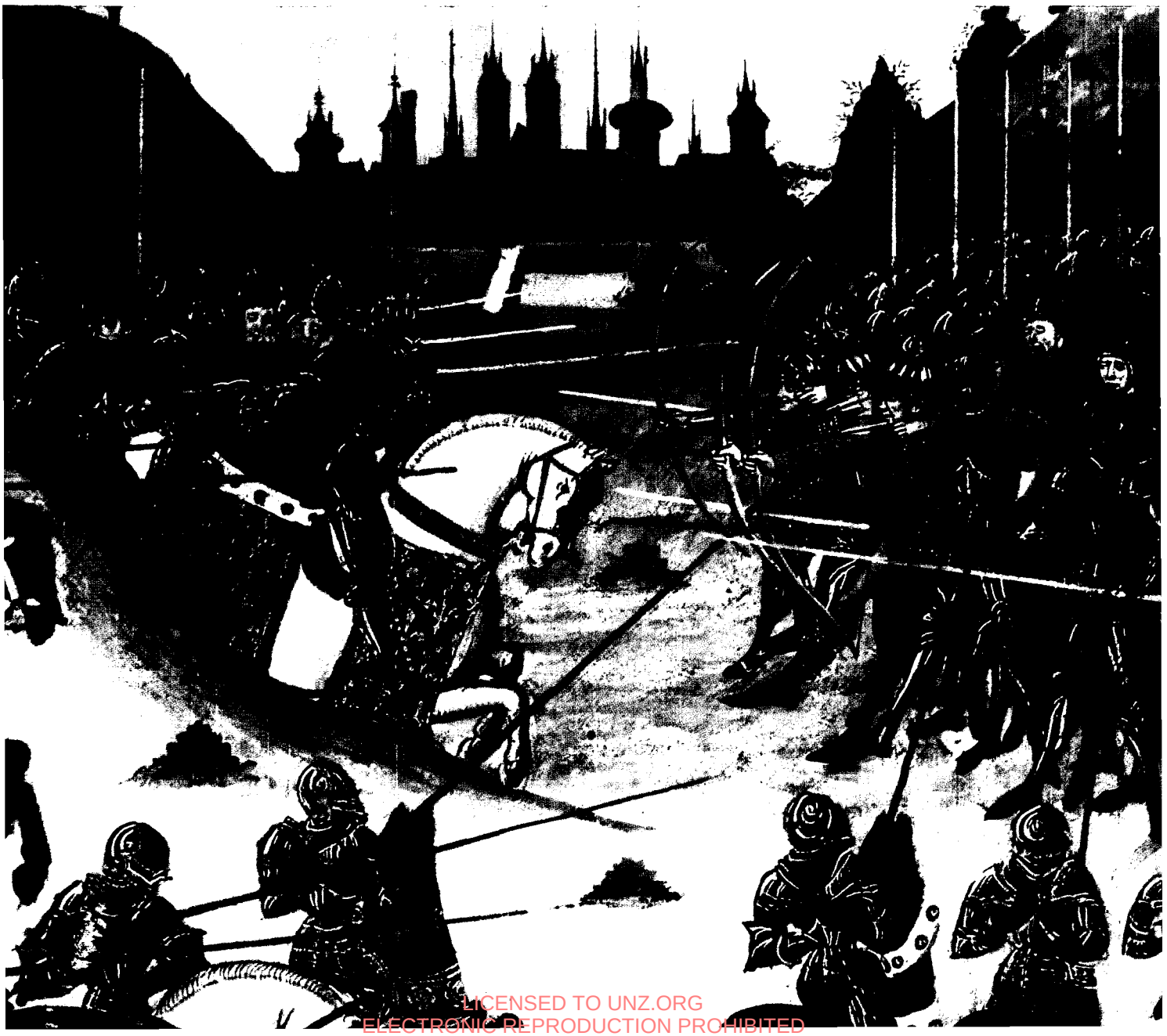
15th century battle scene, Froissart Chronicles, Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris



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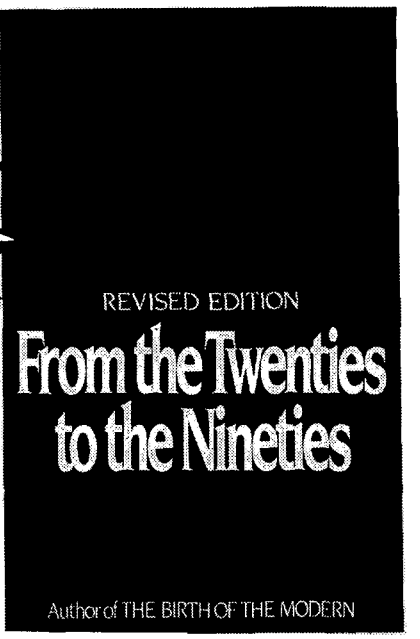

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Jerusalem

Whose city—whose "holy city" is it ?

It's twenty-five years, since Israel's victory in the Six-Day War, that the city of Jerusalem has been reunited under Israeli rule. But there is still much talk, and many people insist, that solution of the "Middle East Problem" will not be possible until Israeli Jews relinquish their "occupation" and restore the holy city—or, at the very minimum, its eastern part—to its "rightful owners", the Moslem Arabs.

What are the facts?

A city of many nationalities. Before the end of the 1967 Six-Day War, during which the Israeli Defense Forces reconquered Jerusalem from the Jordanians, claims to Jerusalem being a Moslem holy city were rarely, if ever asserted. Jerusalem had always been a city in which many religions and nationalities lived side by side. It was only after the old city was back in Jewish hands that the Moslem Arabs declared their willingness to wage "jihad" (holy war) to bring the city back into Arab possession.

The notion to call Jerusalem an Islamic holy city has only come about in modern times, especially after the Arabs lost the city in the Six-Day War. It now has gained currency by dint of constant repetition. The basis for the claim is that Jerusalem does indeed contain an Islamic holy site, namely the Temple Mount (sacred to both Moslems and Jews) with its two mosques. It is the place from which Mohammed is believed to have ascended to heaven. Mohammed never set foot in Jerusalem. But aware that it was the holy city of Christians and Jews, and wishing to convert them to his new religion, he commanded his followers to build a mosque in Jerusalem. But never in Moslem history did this mosque compare in significance to the Moslem holy cities of Mecca and Medina—cities that no " infidel" may visit.

A tenuous Moslem claim. It's on the basis of this religious tradition that the Moslems designated the entire Jewish Temple Mount to be their holy site. The Israeli Government, in its constant spirit of accommodation to Moslem sensibilities, has largely acceded to this tradition and has put the area in and around the two mosques entirely under Moslem control. But how would Christians feel if, instead of from the Temple Mount, Moslem tradition had Mohammed ascend from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and if the Moslem Arabs were to claim that site as their property? The Christian world, often ready to consent to Moslem claims against Jews and Israelis, would be greatly astonished and would certainly resist such claim. But Moslem Arab assertiveness doesn't end there. On the tenuous claim to the Temple Mount, they have construed a claim to the entire city of Jerusalem (or at the very least to its eastern part), which they have declared to be their "third holiest city". And it would be an insult to all Moslems and all Arabs to leave the city in the hands of the "infidel Jews".

> "Jerusalem has been the center of Jewish life, of Jewish yearning, and of Jewish thinking for over 3000 years."

Jerusalem: never an Arab capital. But the city of Jerusalem—in contrast to Baghdad, Cairo, and Damascus—has never played any major role in the political and religious lives of the Moslem Arabs. It was never a political center, never a national or even a provincial or sub-provincial capital of any country since biblical times. It was the site of one Moslem holy place, but otherwise a backwater to the Arabs. The passion for Jerusalem was not discovered by the Moslem Arabs until most recent history.

Jews are not the usurpers in Jerusalem. They have been living there since the Biblical era and have been the majority population since the 19th century. Jews have holy sites in most cities of the world. But do they claim sovereignty over those cities because of it? Of course not! It would be preposterous. And the Moslem Arab claim to Jerusalem, based on the mosques on the Temple Mount, is just as untenable. Jerusalem has been the center of Jewish life, of Jewish yearning, and of Jewish thinking for over 3000 years. That is the reason that the State of Israel has rededicated the Jewish holy city to be its indivisible capital.

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ABOUT THIS MONTH

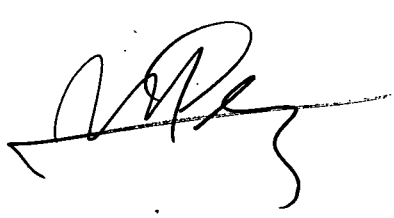
by

Wladyslaw Pleszczynski

A WEEK BEFORE THANKSGIVING, while visiting my parents in my hometown of Santa Barbara, I heard that Bill Clinton and Hillary Rodham Clinton would soon be spending their first weekend at the ocean-front estate leased for them in nearby Summerland by their rich and privileged Hollywood friends, Harry Thomason and Linda Bloodworth-Thomason. Even though there's no place like home, I couldn't wait to return to Washington to read what the prestige press had to say about Summerland and its beach, since I already knew they were a natural match for our soon to be installed frat-boy President. To be sure, I could have guessed that the national media would find a way *not* to mention the two most salient facts about the place, first: that the very informal, clothing-optional part of the beach at Summerland is tucked away in a cove a short jog from the Clintons' new California home; and second: that the ocean waters of Summerland have long been famous for being particularly slick, owing to some poorly capped oil wells along the shoreline that have been out of service for many decades. Well, it only goes to show you: for the inside scoop, you've got to turn to *The American Spectator*.

OF COURSE, PAPERS like the *Washington Post* have made a career of ignoring inconvenient facts. At our 25th anniversary dinner at Washington's Capital Hilton on December 2, publisher Ronald Burr announced that with this issue *The American Spectator*'s circulation has surpassed 114,000. The next morning's *Post* ran a snide story on the event (about which more next month), with not a word about these numbers, perhaps because they now surpass the *New Republic*'s.

NOW A MAJOR REASON why our readership has nearly quadrupled in the last year was the investigative work published in these pages by David Brock on Anita Hill and Daniel Wattenberg on Hillary Clinton. As we begin our next twenty-five years of public service, I'm pleased to report that Messrs. Brock and Wattenberg will be joining *The American Spectator* this coming year as full-time investigative writers, covering Washington and America's politicized institutions in a way they don't like to be covered. (See page 36 for Danny's portrait of a most unusual Harvard student.) David and Danny represent just part of our never-ending commitment to providing you with fresh reporting and provocative writing each month. Since we live under what Bob Tyrrell calls a two-party system with a one-party media, our job comes down to shooting fish in a barrel. As we await the Inauguration Day arrival of Greyhound One, I expect the next four years will see the barrel filled to overflowing, even if Bill Clinton can't fit inside it.



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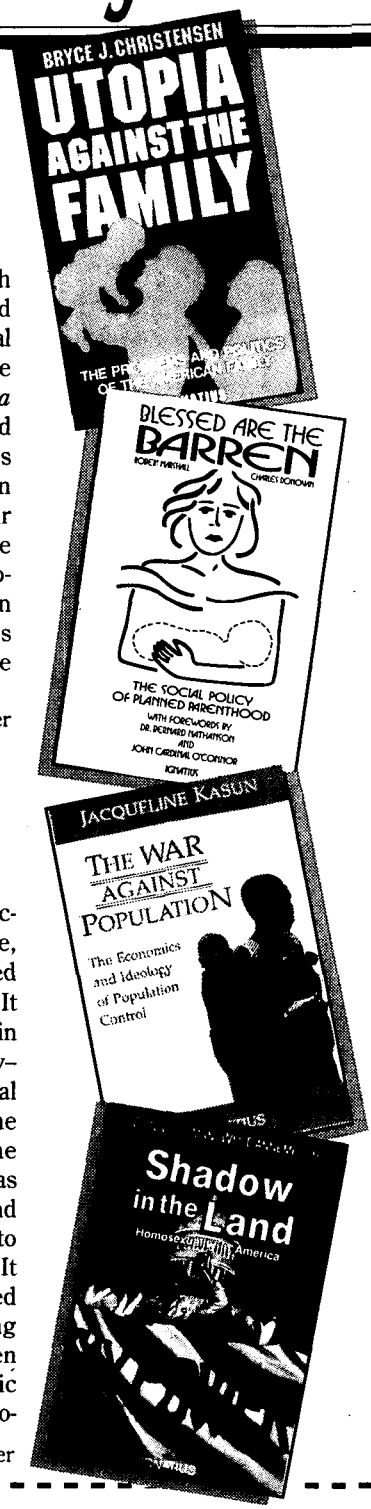
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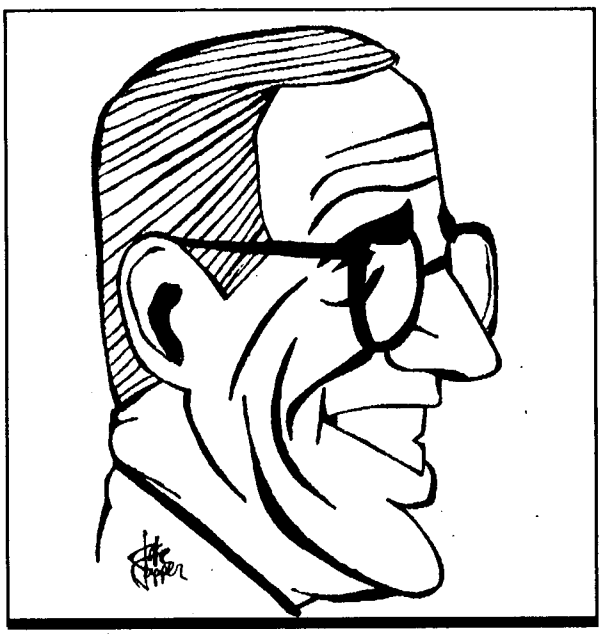

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Cover illustration by John Springs. Interior art by John Springs and Jake Tapper.

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• November is as a dodo! It is also the month Americans celebrate Thanksgiving, and this year the turkey came early. On the other hand, twelve years of incomparable Democratic whining may be at an end. The era of criminalizing government *faux pas* may be adjourned. Among the Democrats, fears about the federal deficit are evanescing even now, along with alarums over the trade deficit, the power of the presidency, "litmus" tests for the judiciary, the disappearance of wetlands, Irangate, Iraqgate, and the spelling of potato. On November 3, George Bush lost the presidency to Governor Bill Clinton, that singular presidential nominee whom the Democrats chose from the weakest field of Democratic contenders in this century (half were retired politicians and one was an obvious narcoleptic). The Conservative Crack-Up arrived on schedule, and by November 18, President-elect Clinton was demonstrating that the Liberal Crack-Up, replete with left-wing zanies in every belfry, still maintains its old dynamism for bringing your basic prehensile Democratic pol to foozle. Before even entering the White House, Mr. Clinton had provoked rows over poofters in the foxhole, Haitians spilling across south Florida, and a visionary "ethics" standard so abundant with loopholes that Mr. Warren Christopher and Mr. Vernon Jordan could preside over his transition team. Moreover, the mysterious Hillary resumed the shocking use of her maiden name, and someone on her staff notified a Washington journalist, Mr. Mike Buchanan of WUSA-TV, that she will adopt the term "presidential partner" rather than "first lady." The next day her staff denied this apparent attempt at a *coup*. Happy days are here again!

• That huge python found in the Philippine presidential palace garden was cooked and eaten by palace guards. Mr. Magic Johnson re-retired from the National Basketball Association. On November 9 in Berlin, Germany, an angry mob of leftists spoiled Germany's Unity Day by pelting German President Richard von Weizsaecker (pronounced Wiseacre) with eggs and organically grown tomatoes containing neither chemicals nor pesticides and posing absolutely no health hazard to the visibly discomfited German leader. Hey, lighten up, Rich; tomatoes are good for you! Eggs, too! If you were pelted by rightists, would they bombard you with such nutritious ingredients, all free of modern contaminants? As President Weizsaecker's egg and tomato–bespattered image retired into a waiting limousine, the thought occurred that were he to boil his clothing it would make a delicious soup, and such an economical use of available resources might give his leftist tormentors a much more sanguine view of him.

• In Martinsville, Indiana, Mr. Larry Burchfield, 28, was arrested at 3 a.m., after he broke into a private home and awakened its owners by playing their piano. The musically inclined Mr. Burchfield was charged with burglary and criminal mischief by arresting officer Richard Wiltermood (pronounced Vil'turood—the *m* being silent in keeping with Officer Wiltermood's life-long insistence that the alphabet contains only twenty-five letters, none with two humps). The Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, cautioned President-elect Clinton against leading the United States into immorality, stressing that its forebodings were based on "deeply rooted moral concern," and perhaps on Miss Gennifer Flowers's lascivious interview in *Penthouse* magazine. The Church and all custodians of morality will be closely following how frequently our incoming President orders flowers in the Oval Office.

• New York's Museum of Modern Art may have a new addition. City workers attempting to resolve flooding problems in Alexandria, Indiana's Riverview Avenue have pulled a 200-pound hairball from the sewer beneath that historic street. Mr. Tom Humphries, supervisor for the city's water management department, remarked that "we thought we had a goat, at first," but it will be a fine gesture when he and his colleagues donate the intriguingly woven ball to MOMA. The oft-disparaged Islamic faith was in the news with at least two stories of a positive nature. According to the newspaper *Abrar* in Teheran, Iran's state-run Panzdah Khordad Foundation has raised the bounty on Mr. Salman Rushdie, author of *Satanic Verses* and now a sadder-but-wiser abominator of Mrs. Thatcher, to over $2 million. And when British Christians were slow to apprise the producers of the satirical television series "Spitting Image" that they displayed poor taste in featuring a rubber puppet of a grotesque hippie-style Jesus Christ, the United Kingdom Action Committee for Islamic Affairs leapt to Jesus' defense with good effect. "Anything which portrays Jesus in a casual form of entertainment is degrading," Dr. Iqbal Saccrani of the Action Committee declared upon telephoning the series' producers, and he expressed his "anger and revulsion." "Spitting Image" spokesman Mr. Bill Dare got the message (the Action Committee had coordinated the UK campaign against Rushdie) and promised never to use the offending puppet again, adding that he had never used a puppet of Mohammed because "we don't poke fun at minorities in this country." Do I hear your knees shaking, Mr. Dare?

• Hats off to Mr. Andrew Martinez, and for that matter pants off and shirt off and all other manner of raiment. Mr. Martinez is the young visionary who has been suspended from class and barred from campus at the ridiculous University of California at Berkeley, home of the late Free Speech Movement and so many other spectacles of quaint left-wing guff. Mr. Martinez, known on campus as Berkeley's "Naked Guy," had been attending class stark naked to further freedom of expression and several more of the Liberal mysteries; but the universi-

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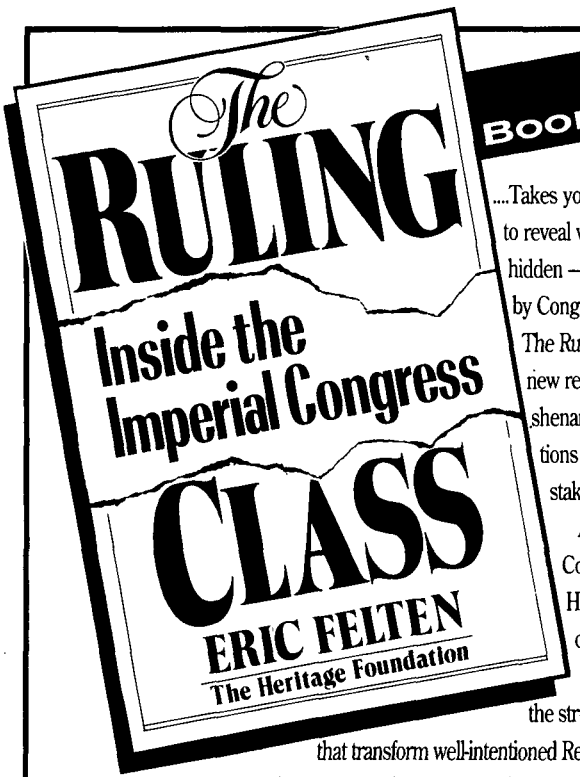
ty threw the book at him when he attended Vice Chancellor Russell Ellis's disciplinary hearings wearing only a back pack. After the hearing, the nicely tanned and trim Mr. Martinez asseverated, "It's kind of typical that the university is taking this authoritarian approach. . . . This is supposed to be a dialogue between us. . . . I don't think he has to take this father figure attitude and say 'No, I won't talk to you.'" Alas, Vice Chancellor Ellis would not talk to Mr. Martinez, nor would his office answer our repeated telephone queries as to what Mr. Ellis himself was wearing at this historic meeting. During a golf outing in Little Rock, Arkansas, President-elect Clinton took our Lord's name in vain. Ever optimistic, Senator Bob Dole urged President Bush to pardon Former Secretary of Defense Cap Weinberger and other Iran-contra defendants. And in her nationally syndicated newspaper column, Dr. June M. Reinisch notified readers that post-orgasmic "goose bumps" are perfectly normal but should disappear within five minutes. If they persist, a dermatologist should be consulted, and perhaps a heating repairman.

• The ruling body of the Church of England voted to make its priesthood bisexual. The United States withdrew from Subic Bay, the Philippines. Mr. Riddick Bowe, after intoning several inscrutable Islamic orisons in the presence of Washington insider Mr. Marion Barry, entered the ring to defeat a valiant Mr. Evander Holyfield for the heavyweight title of the world. From Kuala Lumpur comes word that Mr. Abdul Fadli Talib, 24, an off-duty bus conductor died after swallowing his dentures whilst sleeping in a bus bound for Seremban, a city that has been called the Body Odor Capital of the World. In London, the Duchess of Beaufort, 63, was found hanging from a ten-story building at the Gloucester Royal Hospital during what the *Sunday Telegraph* called an "abseiling stunt." No one was injured, and no American aside from a few scholars of old English could explain what an "abseiling stunt" might be. In Japan, the Yokohama Tire Company recalled hundreds of tires that it had placed on Jeep Grand Cherokees designated for Brunei, after a Brunei holy man discovered that the tire tread resembled a line from the Koran deemed offensive to Islam.

• The staff of *The American Spectator* killed off the month preparing to celebrate on December 2 the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the magazine. When the magazine was founded it was merely an attempt by non-radical students at Indiana University to boot the New Left's Students for a Democratic Society from control of student government. Presently the support of students at the University of Chicago and Harvard made it the national magazine of anti-radical students. Its writers believed that the 1960s radicals would transform American universities into anti-intellectual sanctums of mediocrity, Vietnam into a Communist hoosegow. We argued that those unlucky regions of American life that might fall to the radicals' rants would become cheerless sloughs of drug addiction, sexually transmitted diseases, and various other neoteric pathologies. Over in Oxford, sozzled by the beards and the sandals, Boy Clinton demurred. He shoved off to Moscow to see a future that works.

—RET



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Chill Factors

Arriving as it did near the eve of Halloween, Grover Norquist's article ("The Coming Clinton Dynasty," *TAS*, November 1992) was a chilling tale appropriately aimed at conservatives like me, who are thoroughly disgusted with George Bush. By the time this letter appears, either Bush will have squeaked by the hideous apparition of a Clinton presidency, or the monstrosity of a Democratically controlled presidency *and* Congress will be slavering to Gore the taxpayers.

The former does not render moot the thesis of the article. The Democrats have learned in the years after Watergate how to craftily usurp the powers of the presidency. A complacent electorate, leftist educators, and a liberal media have all abetted Congress in their drive to arrogate power to the legislative branch. Ironically, that icon of conservatism, President Reagan, had it in his purview to challenge the office of special prosecutor in the Iran-contra hearings but found it expedient, instead, to throw those who ably served him into the maws of a politically vindictive, self-accountable machine.

Is it any wonder, then, that George "Get Along, Go Along" Bush did nothing during *his* term to cut these extralegal harpies off at the knees?

A plan of action, not planned inaction, can correct the deficiencies of the conservative movement. Between now and 1996, when (it is hoped) a very articulate and combative Jack Kemp will be the party's nominee, the following goals must be vigorously pursued:

- Work diligently to find a replacement for the moribund Rich Bond as Chairman of the RNC. . . .
- Discredit all reports and sources of reports often and emphatically which seek to portray the Reagan economic juggernaut as a freak aberration, fueled by funny money and profiting at the expense of the middle class and the poor. (I fail to see how the recipients of government largesse can be exploited by the rich, yet this nonsense goes unchallenged altogether too often.)
- Create more avenues of communication that will allow the expression of conservative values and economic theory to be encountered by the populace at large even if this means buying blocks of television or starting new cable stations nationwide. *The American Spectator*, *National Review*, *Insight*, the *Conservative Chronicle*, etc. are great—but it's people who are not exposed to conservative values who need to be reached! The success of Rush Limbaugh points the way to future converts and illustrates how attractive conservatism can be.

As is amply demonstrated in this fine article by Mr. Norquist, we are running out of room and options when our lives are proscribed by the opposition party.

I'll never forgive George Bush for ignoring our principles and assuming our vote, but thanks to Grover Norquist, I'll do my part to keep the monster in the basement for another four years.

—Michael R. Murray
Upper Darby, Pennsylvania

New Enemies, A Love Story

This letter is to express my sincere appreciation to P.J. O'Rourke (and all of the unsung heroes at *The American Spectator*) for preventing my untimely death. As fate would have it, I received my first issue of *TAS* on the evening of the recent presidential election, and had I not been cheered by O'Rourke's "1992 New Enemies List" (*TAS*, November 1992), I undoubtedly would have driven my pickup truck (Bush-Quayle bumper sticker and all) directly over the nearest cliff.

As a former Army officer, who *volunteered* to serve this country, I am more than a little nauseated by the thought of "The Oxford Commando" as Commander-in-Chief. As an attorney working in the law enforcement field, I am even more queasy at the thought of someday reading the words: "Writing for the majority, Justice Cuomo asserted . . ."

Having been an ardent P.J. O'Rourke fan for several years, I truly enjoyed the Enemies List. I felt it was one enemy short, however, without the inclusion of my current nemesis: National Public Radio. For my money, the most empty-headed, half-baked, politically correct, college-campus-socialism-spewing, bleeding-heart lefties this side of the UC Berkeley English Department can be found on NPR.

Time and space preclude a detailed description of the perpetually daffy liberalism that pervades NPR's programming, but suffice it to say it is no coincidence that their moronic ravings are carried almost exclusively by college radio stations. When not blaming every conceivable evil on "The Bush Administration," NPR features stories on such important topics as: an American opera based on the kidnapping of Patty Hearst; public misconceptions about the writings of Hillary Clinton; why more people now believe Anita Hill; and—my personal favorite—a British musical production that combines the works of Stravinsky with the music of the Sex Pistols.

I keep praying that someday P.J. will train his sights on NPR. Until then, please accept my late addition to the Enemies List, and my thanks for helping me through the first part of what promise to be four truly horrific years.

—Mike Ryan
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

My Enemies List:

HUD
NLRB
EPA
SBA
FHA
OSHA
UMTA
AFL-CIO
FDIC
USDA
RTC

—Joseph Moss
Atlanta, Georgia

Hot Under the Choler

David Frum's reactionary choler blinds him to the message of my book, *Who Prospers?*, which he reviews in the November issue. His fundamental misreading is captured in his observation, "The bad news is that culture is infinitely important; the good news is that it is equally malleable."

Any serious reader of *Who Prospers?* and my first book, *Underdevelopment Is a State of Mind*, will know that I view culture as deeply rooted and persistent. I believe, for example, that Latin America's problems reflect a value and attitude system that has persisted for more than five centuries; that Japanese,

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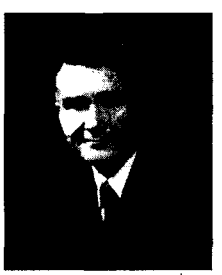

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Korean, and overseas Chinese achievement is rooted in the Confucian ethos, formulated 2,500 years ago, much as Jewish achievement has a lot to do with an ages-old value system; and that David Hackett Fischer's *Albion's Seed* is on the mark in tracing American regional characteristics back through our colonial period to regions of pre-colonial Britain.

Culture *does* change, as an increasingly democratic Spain, a declining Britain, and a substantial—and growing—black American middle class demonstrate. But I repeatedly make the point that cultural change is difficult and slow—far from "malleable"—and better measured in decades than years. Although the word "government" may cause Mr. Frum's bile to flow, there is convincing evidence that political leadership can play a crucial role in cultural change and progress. Japan's transformation in the late nineteenth century under the Meiji leadership is a case in point.

The fringe nature of Mr. Frum's ideology is apparent from his definition of the "legitimate" middle class, which "derives its income . . . from commerce and entrepreneurship, [not] from government employment." His social Darwinism and disdain of government apparently extend to education—the principal tool of the Meiji leadership's modernization of Japan. He is the only person I've seen in print who sneers at Head Start programs.

Mr. Frum accuses me of being motivated by "a striking faith in the power of social engineering." He could not be wronger. Thirty years of work in foreign aid have taught me how intractable the problems of poverty, authoritarianism, and extreme social inequality can be. But at the root of human progress is a worldview that says, "I can change things; I can make things better." By contrast, most poor people—in the United States, in the Third World, and elsewhere—see life as something that happens to them. We—government, business, the media, educators, clergy—can either try to help people understand that progress is possible and what it takes to make progress happen, or we can, as Mr. Frum would apparently have us do, be passive witnesses to the carnage of the survival of the fittest.

—Lawrence E. Harrison
Vineyard Haven, Massachusetts

David Frum replies:
Between 1868 and 1945, Meiji Japan endured, among other things:

- a coup d'état dethroning the dynasty of shoguns that had ruled the country for 250 years;
- rebellions against the coup that amounted to civil war;
- forced industrialization;
- mass famine;
- the forced imposition of a new religion, emperor worship;
- the forced imposition of a primary education system based on that religion;
- the razing, once by earthquake and once by enemy bombing, of the capital city;
- the conquest and loss of a colonial empire;
- four wars, the last of them involving total mobilization of the society and ending in abject defeat;
- two atomic bombings;
- and the beginning of six years of foreign occupation during which all the basic institutions of society, from landholding to the place of women, would be reordered by the conquerer.

If culture is as important and persistent as Mr. Harrison says, then that list of events should suffice to alter it, at least somewhat (although many wise observers of Japan wonder how much the country has in fact changed since feudal times). But if culture is as important and persistent as Mr. Harrison says, I somehow doubt that his sunny prescriptions for patching up America's—notably, more Head Start and a blue-ribbon commission to recommend ways to make television more moral—will do the trick. If the answer is as easy as Mr. Harrison says, the question cannot be very hard.

My complaint against Mr. Harrison's book is not that it banks too much on government, although I admit I think it does; my complaint is that if "culture" is as profound a force in human affairs as he says, it deserves a less blithe analysis.

Roaring Calhoun

I greatly appreciated the kind things that Peter L. Welsh said about my writings on Abraham Lincoln and the American Founding in his review of Garry Wills's *Lincoln at Gettysburg (TAS,* November 1992). I find myself obliged nonetheless to correct him on certain points.

It is not true that John C. Calhoun "shared Lincoln's interpretation of the Declaration." Concerning the proposition "that all men are created equal," Calhoun wrote:

> All men are not created. According to the Bible, only two, a man and a woman, ever were, and of these one was pronounced subordinate to the other.

Taking Jefferson's words in an utterly mistaken sense, Calhoun denied that they had any importance whatever, either in establishing American independence, or in forming the basis of our constitutions, either state or federal.

Mr. Welsh justly condemns Garry Wills for his "contempt for the sanctity of the Founders' Constitution." He goes on to say, however, that this contempt "is most acutely observed in the practice of progressive jurisprudence." He then cites the words of Mr. Justice Brennan, that

> The genius of the Constitution rests not in any static meaning it might have had in a world that is now dead and gone, but in the *adaptability* of its great principle to cope with current problems and needs.

Mr. Justice Brennan's jurisprudence is certainly far removed from the unchanging principles of "the laws of nature and of nature's God" to which Jefferson and Madison and Lincoln subscribed. But it is not as far removed as that of Mr. Justice Rehnquist who, in "The Notion of a Living Constitution," writes that if a

> society adopts a constitution and incorporates in that constitution safeguards for individual liberty, these safeguards do indeed take on a generalized moral rightness or goodness. They assume a general social acceptance neither because of any intrinsic worth nor because of any unique origins in someone's idea of natural justice but instead simply because they have been incorporated in a constitution by a people.

That the safeguards of liberty in our Constitution do not have *"any intrinsic worth"* and that they have no foundation whatever in any *"idea of natural justice"* is positivism of the crudest kind. It means, moreover, that the safeguards of individual liberty and the safeguards of slavery, in the Constitution of 1787, stand upon the

(continued on page 96)

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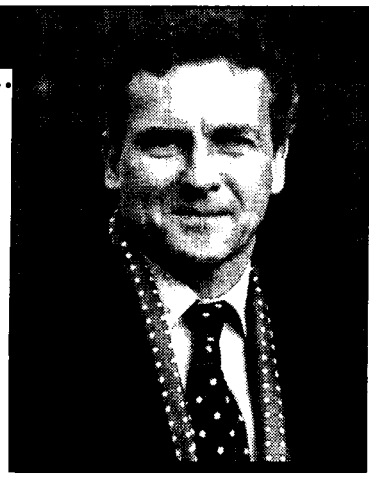

A Quarter-Century

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

This magazine is now twenty-five years old. That is old enough to drink and to vote; and, if you review the choices we had in the late election, it helped to do both simultaneously.

I founded the magazine while studying for a graduate degree in history at Indiana University. The first few issues were put together at my off-campus residence, a house trailer that one would think Indiana University had now turned into a literary shrine.

But no, I am told university officials had our rusting old cocoon destroyed, fearing as they did that the virus might spread or that this relic of literature and rebellion might some day be used as a prop for a growing cult of personality.

Actually, the virus did spread. The anti-radical students who joined the staff (two, Publisher Ron Burr and Kapellmeister Baron Von Kannon, are still with me) were fetched by the free-market ideas of Milton Friedman and a hawkish stance toward Communism—all in all, the politics of Governor Ronald Reagan and of MP Margaret Thatcher. In 1968 many of us went to the Republican Convention to demonstrate in support of the Governor's valorous—if brief—campaign. Over the next few years, encouraged by the likes of Bill Buckley and Irving Kristol, and with the active participation of their generation's sons and daughters at large throughout the Republic, this magazine became the national magazine of non-radical students. As I recently wrote in *The Conservative Crack-Up*[1]: "Unlike the *New Republic*, the *Nation*, or any of a half-dozen wisenheimer magazines that in recent years have come and gone to the ooohs and amens of the culturati, *The American Spectator* originated as an off-campus magazine created solely by students. . . . *The American Spectator* was born wayward and destined to be skeptical."

I was at pains to lay out the magazine's origins and early adventures in that book, and I am at pains to do so again here, because the popular conception of the 1960s generation as radical and left-wing is demonstrably false. The vast majority of 1960s youth were not radical. In 1972 they voted for Richard Nixon; they supported the war in Vietnam, along with the rest of the American people, almost to the end. In recent studies it has become clear that the 1960s generation rarely smoked dope, engaged in zoo sex, or demonstrated for or against anything. My compeers were much like my colleagues at the early *Spectator*, but apparently the recent fabricators of American history want to avoid this prosaic truth. And now that the Savior Clinton is breaking out his bell-bottom trousers, dusting off his peace symbols, and preparing to welcome the surviving Mamas & Papas into the White House for granola wine, we are going to have to endure another—perhaps somewhat sanitized—reprise of 1967's "Summer of Love." Well, please remember that in that mythic summer, with Beethoven thundering in the background and plenty of beer in the refrigerator, my pals and I were pasting up the first issue of what has for twenty-five years pinned the tail on these donkeys while keeping the record straight and amusing.

Amusing! More amusing than Vaudeville! Than Monkey Island at the Zoo! Than almost any foreign trip undertaken by Jimmy Carter! Since the 1960s America has endured the longest period of reform in its history. TR's Square Deal had a beginning and end, so did the New Nationalism, the New Deal, the New Frontier, and even the grotesque and frequently criminally insane Great Society. The real zealots of the 1960s (as distinguished from the more modestly deranged types within the Kennedy and Johnson governments) have roared and stamped their feet for a quarter century; and with their personal liberation claptrap, their social engineering, their food phobias, their New Age revelations, and all the other absurd and risible guff these fevered buffoons show no signs of sobering up or shutting down. How could all this not have been a most amusing time for us? Now, with a second-rate governor from a third-rate state strutting into the White House convinced that he is an intellectual aristocrat but a poor boy made good, a moral colossus but a swank, a Baptist but a post-Christian cosmopolitan, and—who knows?—a man but somehow a woman, the amusement has just begun!

The American Spectator has gone through several different phases. In the 1970s we were the first magazine of the conservative movement to welcome wayward Liberals into our pages. Eventually, such wandering Liberals as Kristol, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Elliott Abrams, and other co-conspirators came to be known as neoconservatives. They were to be among the most effective of Reaganites. In the early 1980s,

[1]Simon & Schuster, 319 pages, $23.

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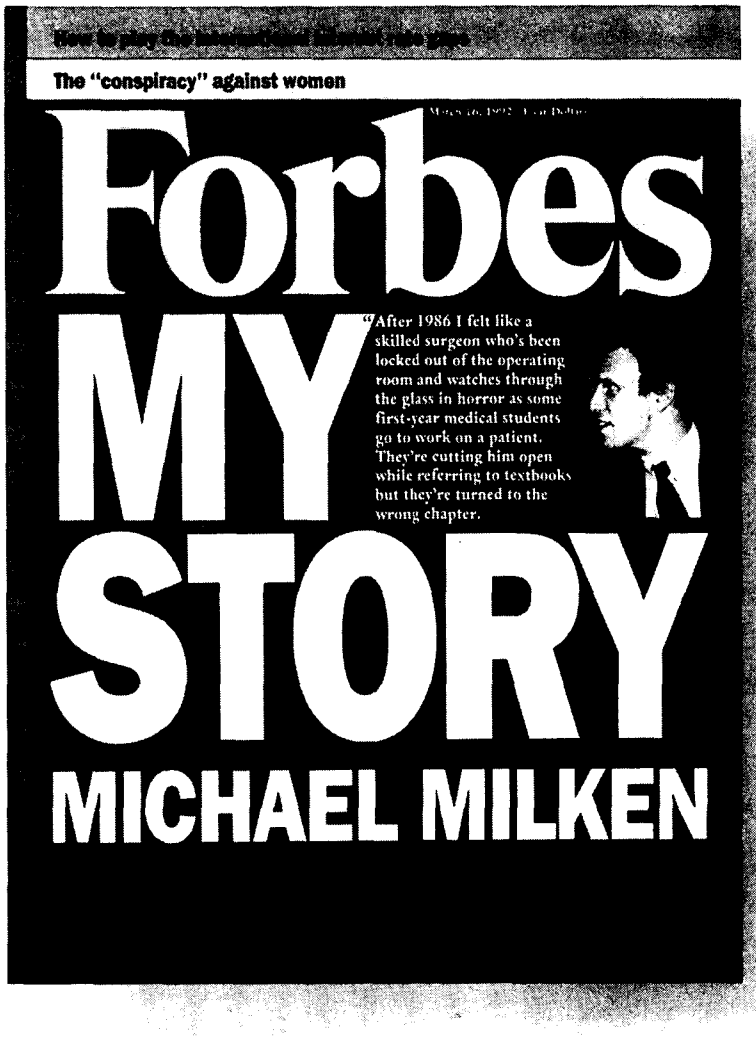
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when the Liberal mandarins presiding over American *Kultur* began to fear that Reaganism might sweep them off into concentration camps somewhere in Kansas, the mandarins treated us very cordially. *The American Spectator* was dubbed Washington's new "in" magazine, though we were still located in Bloomington, Indiana. Then about 1984, when the mandarins discovered that Reaganism did not have to be feared as a force in *Kultur*, we were indulged sweetly no more. The mandarins polluted *Kultur* with more quaint left-wing politics than ever before. It became what we call *Kultursmog*, though no environmentalists joined *The American Spectator* in attempting to contain this repellent politicizing. We tried to rouse the Reaganites to influence *Kultur* as the New Deal and the New Frontier once did. We failed.

Now *The American Spectator* has begun a new phase. We are discomfiting Washington with the unwanted scrutiny of our investigative journalists. Our circulation has soared to over 114,000—up from some 30,000 nine months ago—and *The American Spectator* has become the conservative magazine of investigative journalism. Yes, of course, we shall continue to review the *Kultur* and fumigate the *Kultursmog*. For a certitude, we shall continue to review books and the arts from a conservative perspective. There will remain essays and reports on public policy. My solemn, public-spirited philippics against the Republic's public nuisances will not be adjourned. But we shall add to the repast a nutritious course of investigative journalism. It will originate on Capitol Hill, in the bureaucracy, the political back rooms, wherever skullduggery and threats to the taxpayer and to the Bill of Rights might be conjured up.

For twenty-five years my colleagues and I have had a grand and gaudy time. Many have departed our offices, bringing their talents to other publications and to broadcast studios. But all of them are together with me in this: we thank our readers, our advisers, and our financial supporters for their interest, their companionship, and even the occasional spitball launched our way. But is it not now time for Indiana University to place at least a bronze plaque at the scene of our first crimes? Had I robbed banks *à la* John Dillinger or made a couple of moody movies *à la* James Dean, the solemnizing would have been performed long ago. ❐

It's a Boy!

Bring on the clichés! Heap high the platitudes! I suppose one of the reasons I wanted to see George Bush win this election was that such a win would have been almost unprecedented. Our journalists would have had to come up with a few original observations. The newspapers and airwaves might have been blank for days.

Now, however, we are going to have to endure endless flapdoodle about "The Baby Boomers Come of Age," "Clinton Up From The Log Cabin," and "The Comeback Kid." And then there is the jogging prop. George Bush jogged excessively to be sure, but most political watchers had the decency to avert their gaze. Boy Clinton and Boy Gore are going to be ubiquitously jogging around in their underwear, and wearing infantile hats and relating personal details that might embarrass even a gossip columnist.

There is a certain variety of American male that seems to think the further one proceeds into middle age the more one should act like a small boy. Do not be surprised if on inauguration day Bill enters the White House wearing a baseball cap backwards and riding a skateboard, while his Vice President flies a kite out back by the Rose Garden. On the campaign trail, Bill assiduously wore his baseball cap and even a *Rolling Stone* T-shirt. Next he will be wearing a Grateful Dead T-shirt and insisting that he has acne.

In contemporary American politics a presidential race is there for the incumbent to lose, not for the challenger to win. As I wrote in the early 1980s—much to the discomfort of my fellow conservatives—the 1980 election was not a mandate for Ronald Reagan's conservatism but a rejection of Jimmy Carter's liberalism. This election has seen a rejection of George Bush's conservatism, such as it was. In both elections, the voters quite properly recognized that their President's public philosophy had damaged the economy and in Jimmy Carter's presidency it had damaged foreign policy as well. Jimmy Carter's liberalism was state-of-the-art: Keynesian monetary policy, price controls on energy, moral superiority everywhere, and—let me add—dozens of new policy breakthroughs to further what seems to be modern liberalism's fundamental goal, to wit, social disintegration.

George Bush's conservatism was not quite state-of-the-art. In fact, many conservatives saw in it great gobs of liberalism for moderate Republicans, as the President distanced himself from Reagan by breaking his pledge on taxes, allowing federal bureaucracies to reregulate the economy, and approving a civil rights bill that foreordains quotas, plus a disabilities bill that will enrich thousands of lawyers pursuing thousands of nuisance suits.

The economy was sluggish in the main because of the heavy burden of taxation and regulation, most notably the neurotic regulation of bank loans by bank regulators who have caused a credit crunch that is inimical to economic growth. Still, George Bush was at least to some degree conservative, though ideologues of the left are going to have a very hard time claiming that his policies have been an extension of the policies of Ronald Reagan. They will try, of course, because they live in an illusory world filled with evil conservatives and saintly liberals. Real issues such as economic growth do not fetch them.

Such issues do fetch the electorate. The most telling results of the election were, first, that an extraordinarily high number of voters turned out to vote for Ross Perot, the most successful third-party candidate since Teddy Roosevelt; and, second, that in every state where the electorate could vote on term limitations the measure won, and usually by huge margins. The American people have grown exceedingly impatient with Washington. Owing to the way our politicians have rigged the system, the electorate's impatience has been futile for years. In this election even the most insulated Washingtonians must have gotten a glimpse of the electorate's dissatisfaction.

Boy Clinton insists that he is in sync with the people and that he brings new

(continued on page 95)

Adapted from RET's weekly Washington Times *column syndicated by Creators Syndicate.*

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Georgia (Ave.) on My Mind

by Tom Bethell

A week before the election I had dinner with a group of British journalists. All had recently arrived in the country, all had bought copies of the "Gennifer Flowers" issue of *Penthouse* at the airport, and all were amazed at the media blackout of the story. The Clinton campaign's least-convincing denial of his involvement with Flowers was the response to reports that the governor's car and driver had been spotted in her apartment driveway a number of times. Some of his aides lived in the same building, said campaign manager Betsey Wright, so he was there on official business. Gennifer's most trenchant comment—"A man who will cheat on his wife will lie to the American public"—is not a refrain likely to be picked up by the U.S. news media. Flowers says that Clinton has "two big moles on his back." Next summer, will a vacationing President Clinton appear in public without a shirt on?

• • •

Two weeks after the election the Clintons came to Washington and went to dinner with Vernon Jordan, a civil rights leader who has done well by doing good; and with Pamela Harriman, a remarkably successful social climber from England. The Clintons also attended a reception given by the radical-chic Children's Defense Fund. On hand was the actress Glenn Close, who personally felt "a huge sense of hope and relief" that Hillary would soon be in the White House. Miss Close has a four-and-a-half-year-old daughter and until now has "despaired over her future and the future of other children in this country." She expects that Hillary will be a "huge force" at the White House.

It is good to know, incidentally, that the founder and president of the Children's Defense Fund, the sainted Marian Wright Edelman, sent her own children to Sidwell Friends, one of the more expensive and exclusive private schools in Washington. For her own children, at least, Marian put safety and education ahead of merely ideological considerations. Al and Tipper Gore have also sent their children to private school in Washington. Let us hope that they continue to do so, and that Bill and Hillary likewise send Chelsea to a private school.

On the same visit, the President-elect took a much publicized stroll along the 5200 block of Georgia Ave. NW, which is five miles from the Capitol Building. According to a friendly page-one article in the *Washington Post*, Clinton "strolled Georgia Avenue yesterday like a regular guy, handing out high fives, sampling Chinese food and greeting a fellow Georgetown University alumnus with a hearty 'Yo, my man!' " The same story described the area as "one of the city's prime black business districts." A few days later, after the metal detectors and interlocking street barricades had been removed, I decided to go and see Georgia Ave. for myself.

I traveled on the No. 70 bus, past Howard University, where the students are mostly black. For those who knew Washington in decades past but have not returned, the city has been in steady decline for years. It's especially noticeable as you leave Union Station and head west along Massachusetts Avenue for a few blocks. Then turn north, and you're on the road to Georgia Ave.

You pass through a dreary landscape of deserted city blocks, with nothing but weeds and rubble on display; boarded up buildings, their entrances sometimes cemented off with cinder blocks; torn, forlorn posters ("Student Shut 'em Down Day, May '92," "African Liberation Day '92," "Fight Genocide: Vote Against the Death Penalty, Nov. 3"); potholed streets; abandoned liquor stores; rusted signs; smashed glass; broken casements. Everything is ground down with dirt, depression, abandonment, futility, and neglect.

The population of the District of Columbia has declined from over 800,000 in 1950 to just under 600,000 today, a 25 percent drop , and the decline is continuing. White flight has been succeeded by black flight, as Charlotte Allen pointed out in a detailed article in the *Washington City Paper* recently. These things are not acknowledged by officialdom or reported in the mainstream press. "At the District of Columbia Office of Planning," Allen wrote, "where the government demographers work, an atmosphere of denial straight out of an Elisabeth Kubler-Ross handbook prevails."

Along with New York City, Washington, D.C. has since World War II been one of the main laboratories of the American liberal experiment. We are only beginning to see the magnitude of the disaster. And we cannot expect the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post* to tell us what happened, since they have played a key role in promoting the experiment. For the last twelve years, of course, it has been easier and much more preferable to blame everything on the Republicans—Ronald Reagan in particular. One of the more delightful aspects of Bill Clinton's election is that Democrats are finally going to have to take responsibility for Democratic policies—which have unfortunately been pursued all along. (All right, Reagan made an effort in his first two years in office to stem the tide.) I suppose for another year or two the liberals will continue blaming urban chaos on the legacy of Reagan, or whatever, but the day is coming when they are going to have to

Tom Bethell is The American Spectator*'s Washington correspondent.*

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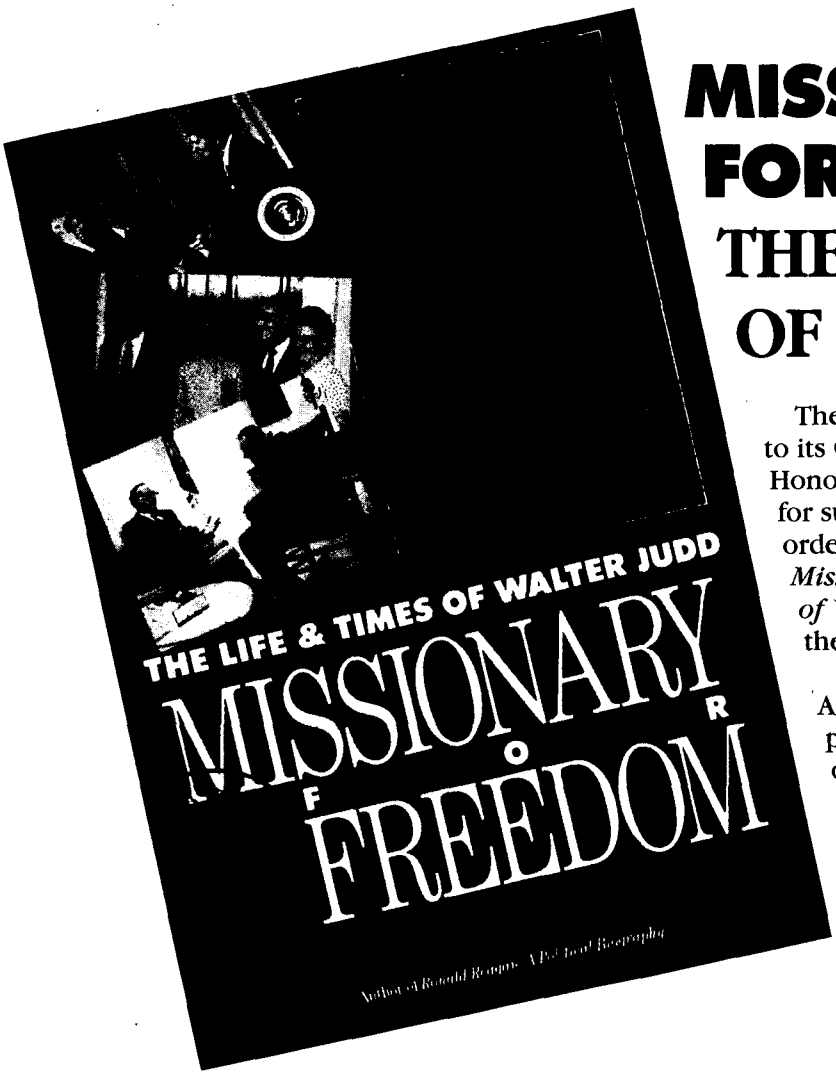

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face up to the catastrophic effects of transferring wealth from the productive to designated victims whose unproductiveness is their meal ticket.

The bus pulled up at Hamilton Street. The area was dingy, unimpressive. Not much more than a row of storefronts along two or three blocks: a Popeye's across the street, a gas station on the corner. Here were Used Tires, Special Hennessy, Emmanuel Apostolic Church, Unisex Relaxed Look, Permanent Wave, Sing Long Chinese-American Carryout, People's Involvement Corporation Ga. Ave. Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization, People's Drug. How could this bleak stretch be "one of the city's prime black business districts"? Clinton's visit had evidently been a coup of sorts for 4th Ward city councilwoman Charlene Drew Jarvis, a national co-chairman of the Clinton-Gore campaign. "This is going to be a source of hope and pride for years to come," she said later.

Did someone say black? Most of the people working in the few stores that were open (at the lunch hour, I might add) seemed to be recent immigrants—I would guess half the people behind the counters in those two blocks. There were venturesome Kims at Kim's Cleaners, Jing Qiang Chen at Sing Long, Tesfaye Kumbi at Hamilton Grocery, Yong Chong at Hamilton Beverage, and let me see here, Haile Alemseged also at Hamilton Grocery. He arrived from Ethiopia ten years ago and speaks good English. I went into one store and started scribbling into a notebook. Two storekeepers, possibly Cambodian, were stooped over canned goods, changing the prices. They looked up at me nervously, perhaps assuming I was a city official noting down code violations. I tried to speak to them but they understood nothing—or pretended not to. (No need to make things easy for the revenue agents.) They just stood there, silent and poker-faced, until I left.

In one convenience store a head peered out through a minimal aperture in a solid wall of Plexiglas. Kim looked over at me inquisitively. Secret Service returning for another check, perhaps? Business not good, he said. One robbery lately. He gestured with his thumb up the street—"drug dealers." Anything else I wanted? I walked up the street from Ingraham to Jefferson, one block from where Clinton walked, and almost all the stores were boarded up. Those that were not were heavily fortified with wrought iron gates and fences. Buzz you in, if they like your looks. There have been eight murders within a mile in the past year. "We card all customers," said a liquor store notice. "No ID, No Sale."

I started to walk north of Hamilton, until I spotted, dead ahead, a bad-ass cluster of five youths in regulation gear: gleaming white sneakers, backward-facing peaked caps, black pants and loose tops three sizes too big, and that ever-so-nonchalant look. There was no one else in sight on that block and so I decided against interviewing them for the story. Did someone say black-on-black crime? I think they would have been willing to make an exception in my case. I turned tail and walked back down to Hamilton Street. A laundromat at the corner proclaimed itself a "drug free zone," but even there it didn't feel entirely safe.

"Man, they must be getting ready for some kind of serious, big-time drug bust," the *Washington Post* reported one man as saying on the day before Clinton's arrival. He had spotted the Secret Service agents with their walkie-talkies.

"No man, the president's coming up here to walk around in our 'hood," said his friend. "For real, man? Man I got to give it to him if he is bold enough to come out and walk around here, because some of the people who live here every day don't like walking up and down these streets." No fooling.

"It's scary," Haile Alemseged told me, inside the Hamilton Grocery. "There's a lot of tension." And he did five years in one of Mengistu's jails in Ethiopia, later escaping the country via the Sudan. Alemseged was standing by the big District of Columbia lottery machine installed on the counter. Every few minutes a black working man would come into the store and buy a lottery ticket or two. In other stores it was the same—lottery tickets seem to be the main item of (legal) commerce on the street. The stores get a percentage if they sell a winning ticket, but otherwise there's no percentage for them. A year earlier Hamilton Grocery did sell a winner. Alemseged told me that he is a partner in the business.

I asked him why most of the workers in these stores along Georgia Ave. seemed to be recent immigrants.

"Good question," he said, and paused. Like everyone in the neighborhood, he automatically checks out those coming in from the street, but now he seemed to worry about being overheard. "You go to welfare and you have less respect from society," he said eventually. "Ethiopians work hard to be independent—we have the least welfare acceptance of all the ethnic groups . . ."

Whereas . . . the locals?

Now we were beginning to get into "politics," he told me. He was reluctant to elaborate. I didn't blame him. I bought a lottery ticket for a dollar, and went across the street to Popeye's.

I'm not sure that Alemseged had this quite right, however. He attributed the difference to the higher morale and stronger family ties of new arrivals. Maybe. But many recent immigrants are also not eligible for welfare, and, when they are, those who supervise the handouts have bureaucratic ways of obstructing the applications of foreigners. That may be the key.

• • •

Some of us worry that President Clinton will adopt the supply-side policies that he disparaged ("trickle down"). If he cuts the capital gains tax rate in particular, we may be looking at a two-term President Clinton. So far, he is talking investment tax credit, which is innocuous enough. It gives tax breaks to established companies that "invest" in new equipment, irrespective of the ultimate value of such expenditures. Clinton also has in mind a "short term stimulus" package of accelerated public-works spending. Pretty pathetic stuff—little more than Mossback Republican fare, as Alan Reynolds of the Hudson Institute pointed out. The high and unindexed capital gains tax, however, is specifically aimed at economic success. Its reduction really will encourage new businesses and employment. Boom times will be here again, Clinton will be a hero, and Jack Kemp will be issueless. So, Michael Kinsley, *Washington Post* and *New York Times* editorial writers, Hobart Rowen, John Chancellor, Richard Cohen, listen up! Keep up the barrage of criticism against tax cuts. The rich get richer and the poor get poorer, remember, and we do have that budget deficit to worry about. Let it not be said that you changed your tune just because a Democrat reached the White House. Above all, don't throw us into that supply-side briar patch. ❐

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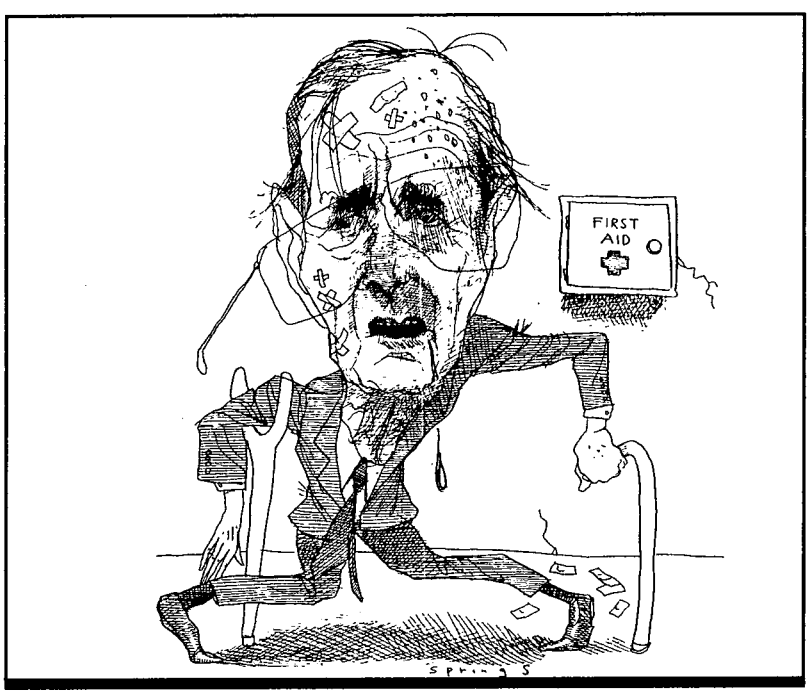
The Bush Crack-Up

Was the President done in by the economy, or by the politics of the economy?

by Brit Hume



The post-election air over Washington is filled with the cries of disappointed Republicans that George Bush's convincing, yet not overwhelming, defeat could have been averted if only the President and his team had run a better campaign. Even Vice President Quayle, saluting the focused, largely blunder-free race run by Bill Clinton, suggested that a poor campaign was responsible for the Republican ticket's demise. In fact, the seeds of Bush's defeat were sown long before the campaign began, and it is far from clear that even the most brilliant race by Bush could have changed the outcome.

Besides, the Bush campaign was by no means as poorly executed as the conventional wisdom suggests. The advance work, for example, was superb, especially in the critical closing weeks. Bush played to large and enthusiastic crowds at colorful and well-organized rallies. His three train trips were especially picturesque and had the additional benefit of giving the candidate himself a noticeable lift: he got an obvious charge from the knots of people who gathered at each crossing to wave to him. Standing on the train's back platform, microphone in hand, the President called out by loudspeaker to onlookers, marveling at the friendliness even of those who held Clinton-Gore signs. One older man in North Carolina shouted sourly to the President, "I don't think so." "Well," said the President, laughing, "I do think so, old fella." He meant it, too. His aides, keenly aware of the odds against him, privately expressed wonder at his refusal to believe he would lose.

Brit Hume is the ABC News White House correspondent.

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By the campaign's final days, Bush was pounding his opponent at every stop on the twin issues of character and trust, and his advance teams were making sure that large home-made banners reading "We trust Bush" festooned the backdrop at every rally. Character and trust were the only issues that seemed to move his poll numbers. His crowds enjoyed his attacks on media bias and his lampooning of Al Gore as the "Ozone man." But none of that seemed to cut it with voters at large, and neither the crowds nor the poll numbers responded to the economic plan Bush had belatedly articulated (re-articulated, actually, since it was mostly a repackaging of earlier Bush proposals). The President also hammered Clinton for his proposed tax increases, which on paper looked like an obvious vulnerability. But that issue had lost its power, at least for George Bush. His broken pledge of no new taxes, of course, was the main reason. Any chance the President had of overcoming that was lost by his seeming failure to understand the pledge and what it had meant in the first place. No issue better exemplifies the political predicament in which the President found himself.

Bush's aides, keenly aware of the odds against him, privately expressed wonder at his refusal to believe he would lose.

To conservatives of every stripe, the "read-my-lips" no-tax promise was an affirmation of their common view that raising taxes simply feeds the growth of the federal government and ultimately serves the Democrats, the party of government. To Bush, however, the no-tax pledge seems to have been nothing more than a politically useful campaign promise, an appeal to the selfish instincts of people who simply wanted to keep more of their money. He didn't put it exactly that way, of course, but there is ample evidence that he had little regard for the tax promise as a matter of policy. Before he broke the pledge, he frequently defended it by saying, "I don't hear a lot of people out there telling me they want their taxes raised." Soon after he had abandoned it, he responded to reporters who shouted questions at him while he was out running one day by saying, "Read my hips." Hardly the words of a man who took his promise seriously as a matter of principle.

In the campaign, he often criticized both Clinton and Ross Perot for their willingness to raise taxes, but he never made the case against doing so on economic, as opposed to purely political, grounds. He never said, for example, that raising taxes is not the way to reduce the deficit because it doesn't work, because the revenues never meet expectations.

Nor did he argue that raising taxes risks stalling the economy, reducing revenues and thus worsening the deficit. This, of course, is precisely what many believe happened as a result of his 1990 budget agreement with Congress. Yet even in repudiating that deal last spring, the President never said what many believed: that hitting a shaky economy with new taxes brought on the lingering recession that destroyed his popularity. Instead, Bush offered the nonsensical argument that because Congress kept trying even after the budget deal to raise both taxes and spending that the deal had not been worth it. In fact, of course, the deal contemplated that Congress would do precisely that. Indeed, what the President got in exchange for agreeing to the taxes was new spending restrictions designed to keep Congress from, for example, using defense cuts to finance new domestic spending. The President frequently spoke proudly of these new provisions, which made his repudiation of the budget agreement that produced them seem all the more hollow. Under these circumstances, it is hard to see how Bush could get any political mileage out of the tax issue. And his lost credibility on that subject made it more difficult for him to get a hearing on his economic ideas generally.

Deep down, it seems, the President believed that the budget deal was *not* a mistake, that it was a necessary political sacrifice in the cause of fiscal responsibility, and a worthwhile gamble to help a sagging economy. The way it was supposed to work was this: the taxes and spending restraints would convince the Federal Reserve that it was safe to loosen credit. The resulting lower interest rates, in turn, would avert the economic downturn that loomed in the spring of 1990. For a time, it appeared this "soft landing" was exactly what would happen. But Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and the ensuing oil price spike wrecked the scenario. Still, when the successful Gulf War brought oil prices back down, the economy began to recover, helped by falling interest rates. The President, it seemed, had gone through what every President dreads—war and recession—and would escape with his popularity not only intact, but greatly enhanced, broken tax promise notwithstanding.

As all the world now knows, it didn't turn out that way. The recovery that seemed to begin in the spring of 1991 faltered, and the economy remained basically stalled for the rest of the year, even as the President—and many economists—proclaimed that it would soon pick up. The final months of 1991 would prove to be the fateful—indeed fatal—hours of the Bush presidency. As he and his advisers nervously scanned the horizon for signs of better economic health, the country grew restless and worried. The Gulf War had ended in victory, the Cold War was over, and times were supposed to be better. Instead they were bad, and in many places getting worse. Unemployment, which tends to go up last in a recession, and come down last in a recovery, was mounting. Republicans across the country were pleading with the White House to do something, anything to show that the President "got it," that he knew people were hurting and

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was going to do something about it. Conservatives on Capitol Hill urged the President to keep Congress in session during the Christmas recess to pass the capital gains tax cut and assorted other economic measures that had languished there for nearly three years. Nobody really believed Congress would pass the bills, but the Christmas session gambit, it was argued, would at least portray the President as a man with ideas on the economy he was willing to fight for.

We will never know, of course, but it is just as plausible that a spectacular, failed effort to gain action on the economy would have made everybody look bad, including the President. Some in the President's inner circle, including the ever-influential budget chief Richard Darman, believed an emergency session to force action would not only fail, but poison the atmosphere throughout 1992, guaranteeing that no economic plan would pass before the election. There was the additional question of what sort of plan it should be. Economic stimulus packages enacted to end recessions have a long record of coming too late and doing too little, if any, good. The virtually unanimous advice the President got from outside economists was that any spending or tax cut plan big enough to make a difference in the economy would also carry a major risk of spooking inflation- and deficit-conscious financial markets and boosting interest rates, thus aborting the best hope of recovery. The President decided to wait until the 1992 State of the Union Address to unveil an economic recovery program, and vowed that whatever he offered would be "no quick fix." What emerged, finally, was a modest set of measures that sounded more substantial than they were and, above all, were not big enough to do any real harm. The White House believed Congress had a major political interest in taking action to boost the economy and that there was a good chance, therefore, that Bush's proposals, or something close to them, would eventually pass. They never did.

The President and his team had miscalculated on a number of scores: on the economy itself, on the depth of public distress about it, and on the chances of getting action from a hostile Congress in an election year. In the end, though, these were all failures to deal effectively not with the problem of the economy itself, but with the politics of the problem. To this day, the economy's best hope remains low inflation and low interest rates, combined with the natural cyclical processes that tend to produce, sooner or later, economic recovery. There is good reason to believe that the President did the right thing economically in leaving the economy alone, even if it did him little good politically.

By midsummer, his political plight had become dire. The Democrats had spent all winter and spring on the campaign trail painting the economy—which had begun to grow slightly—as desperate, and getting worse. Ross Perot had joined in with his jeremiads about the deficit. The President didn't believe things were that bad, but was cut off from making that case by the need to undo the political damage wrought by his months of waiting for things to improve. The notion had taken hold that George Bush had spent his childhood in comfort and his manhood in motorcades and was simply out of touch with the average citizen.

This notion got plenty of nourishment from the news media, which love stories about rich and powerful people and their alleged insensitivity to everybody else. It is one of the oldest forms of journalistic demagoguery, spectacularly illustrated in this instance by the front-page *New York Times* story about Bush's astonishment when shown an ordinary supermarket checkout scanner during a factory tour. It was a fascinating story, but it turned out to be almost wholly untrue. Bush's wonder was mostly politeness and the scanner, far from being ordinary, was a new and different device of which the company was especially proud. The reporter who wrote the *Times* story had not witnessed the event, but had taken his information from a "pool report." (Because the White House press corps is too large to accompany the President everywhere, a rotating "pool" goes with him on such events as plant tours. The pool reporter prepares a detailed account for his colleagues.) Only the *Times* drew from that pool report the picture of Bush as a man awed by a supermarket scanner. It may be the only time on record where anybody got an exclusive story out of a pool report. Such is the *Times*'s influence, however, that

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the story became part of the legend of a President who just didn't know how things were out there in the real world.

The President by then knew full well how things were out there and had the plunging popularity ratings to prove it. But he was in no position politically to argue that the economy was actually better than his political enemies were saying. He had the more urgent need instead to convince people he "got it." Hence his famous statement during the primaries that the economy was in "free fall," which it was not. Not until the third-quarter economic numbers came out in late October, showing a "surprising" 2.7 percent growth rate, did the President abandon his "I understand you're hurting" mantra in favor of a more positive message about the economy. By then both the argument and, more importantly, the good news were too late.

There was much else about the Bush campaign that seemed too late, including its formal start—at the Republican Convention. Until then, the President had largely refused to attack, answer, or even mention his opponents by name. This was widely ascribed to Bush's well-known aversion to campaigning, especially the bare-knuckled variety he used against Michael Dukakis in 1988. Certainly he had liked his office far more than he liked running for it, and he never saw the presidency, as Ronald Reagan for example had, as a continuation of his campaign and the battle of ideas it had entailed. To George Bush, governance is one thing, politics another.

But there was more to his decision to hold his fire than that. The President's pollster and campaign chairman, Bob Teeter, believed that it was one thing for Bush, as Vice President, to go on the attack early and often, and quite another for him to do so as President. A President, Teeter believed, is expected to tend to the nation's business. Thus Teeter thought that for Bush to engage in a political brawl with Pat Buchanan, then Ross Perot, and finally Clinton would have cheapened both him and his office and devalued the incumbency. Teeter further believed that elections are decided in the closing days, and that Bush had plenty of time to make his case at a time when people would be expecting it. Maybe Teeter was right: an earlier entrance into the fray might have made things worse. But the dilemma shows you what a fix Bush was in: he had to choose between potentially demeaning himself and ceding his opponents a six-month head start.

There was a less obvious but important consequence of Bush's above-the-battle stance, not only during the first of the campaign but much of the rest of his presidency. He failed to grasp what Reagan Secretary of State George Shultz observed during his Iran-contra testimony: that, in Washington, no fight is ever over, no issue ever finally settled. The Bush Administration didn't understand the need

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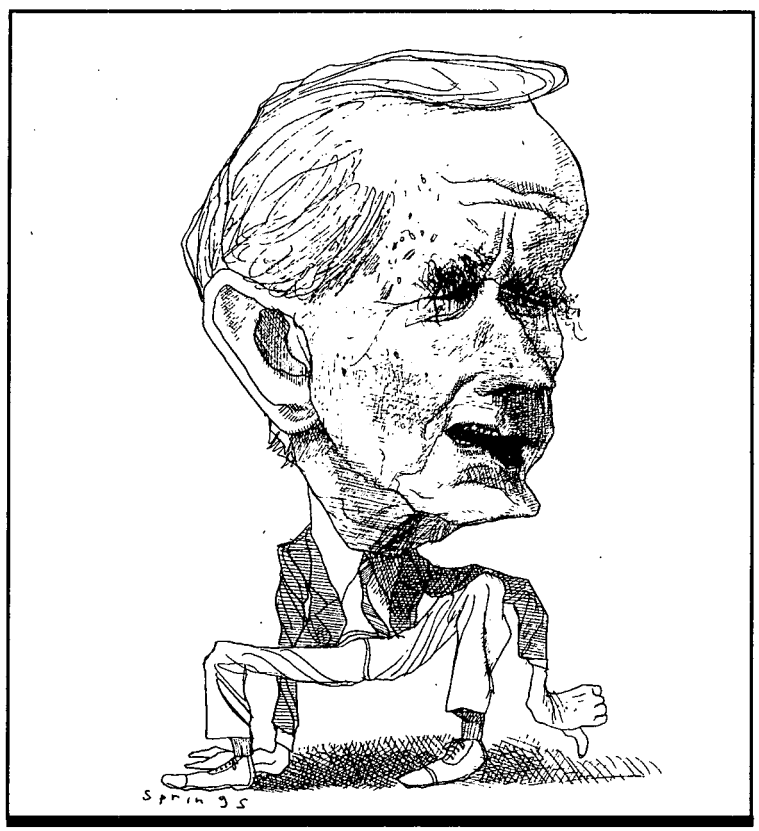
not only to win its battles, but to defend its victories afterward. Thus it allowed the economic successes of the Reagan years to be belittled to the point where Bill Clinton and Al Gore could promise cheering audiences they would undo the economic damage of not just the previous four, but twelve years of "trickle-down" economics. The Persian Gulf War, perhaps the greatest single act of presidential leadership in four decades, was allowed to be dismissed by the President's enemies as merely a war to overcome a tyrant the Bush Administration had "created" by giving him illicit aid. Similar arguments were made against the overthrow of Manuel Noriega. James Reston even wrote in the *New York Times* that Bush, having captured Noriega, didn't "know what to do with him." At the time, of course, Noriega was being prosecuted, successfully it turned out, for drug trafficking. Such criticisms went unanswered, as if the President and his aides thought that because they were balderdash they would collapse of their own weight.

A word is in order here about the news media. It is not a monolith and its biases do not necessarily control the coverage of a political campaign. But during critical periods in this one, anti-Bush media sentiment was obvious and dominant. For example, the harsh attacks on Bush and Quayle at the Democratic Convention by, among others, Maxine Waters and Jesse Jackson were treated as nothing special. But the fiery attacks on Clinton and the Democrats during the GOP convention by Pat Buchanan and others were treated as a sort of orgy of intolerance. No one noted that Buchanan, who had after all tried to defeat Bush, obviously did not speak for him. The media's defenders argue that, after the rough treatment Bill Clinton got on the Gennifer Flowers case and his draft record, no one can say he was treated favorably. But he was. After the primary season, the Flowers case was barely mentioned again. Never mind the allegations about the state job she got and the other woman who was allegedly passed over in Flowers's favor. Never mind that John Tower was deemed by the Democrats who control the U.S. Senate to be unfit for Bush's cabinet for the very kind of alleged peccadilloes that did not disqualify Bill Clinton for the presidency.

New revelations and questions about Clinton's draft record were duly reported, but so were charges about Bush's role in the Iran-contra affair, whether they were new or not. The most conspicuous example was the play accorded the re-indictment of former defense secretary Weinberger on the Friday before the election. Released with the indictment was a copy of one of many Weinberger notes on the case which formed part of the prosecution's evidence against him. It is not uncommon for a sample of the evidence to be attached to an indictment, but it is not an invariable practice, either. What's more, the Independent Counsel could have chosen *any* of the many other notes Weinberger made. The charge against him is that he denied to Congress that any such notes existed. But the news media were utterly uninterested in why the prosecutors chose this particular document to make public five days before the election.



The note itself seemed to say that then Vice President Bush had attended a January 1986 meeting at which Weinberger and George Shultz had made plain their vehement opposition to what they regarded as a straight exchange of arms for hostages. Except for the wording, there was nothing new about the note. The meeting and what was said at it had been known of for some time. What's more, while the note implied Bush had been at the meeting, it did not actually say so; Bush has said he attended the meeting but missed part of it. It is part of his story that while he knew Weinberger and Shultz opposed the arms sales, he did not realize the depth of their opposition, because he had not heard all they said about it.

For example, Bush had been at the Army-Navy game during a meeting the previous month when Weinberger and Shultz had objected strongly to the arms sales, hence Bush's contention that he was "out of the loop." The President has never denied that he supported the arms sales, and that he knew that hostages were expected to be released as a sort of side benefit of improved relations with Iran. What he denies is that he saw the deals at the time as straight arms-for-hostages swaps. He may or may not be telling the truth about that, but it is the same story he has told for years, and because it deals with his state of mind it is unlikely ever to be proved or disproved. The

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media, however, gave a huge ride to the Weinberger note, treating it as new information, which it was not, and reporting that it flatly contradicted Bush's version of events, which it did not. The story dominated campaign coverage for two days and broke whatever momentum the President had in the final days of the race. The coverage mirrored almost precisely the claims about the note made by Bill Clinton, who called a news conference to make the most of it. It came at a particularly opportune moment for Governor Clinton, since he was under withering assault from Bush about his character.

To be haunted by the arms-for-hostages issue must have been an especially bitter irony for George Bush, under whom all U.S. hostages had come home, without any funny business with Iran or anyone else. Yet here again was a case where the luckless Bush was in no position to boast of his achievement. To do so could have tempted terrorists to snatch some more Americans. To be sure, Bush had other good foreign policy news to proclaim, and he certainly tried. He spoke repeatedly of the end of the Cold War, of little children who no longer must live in fear of a superpower nuclear confrontation. He spoke often of Operation Desert Storm and of stopping Iraqi aggression. It doesn't take much imagination to envision what condition the U.S. economy would be in by now were Saddam Hussein still astride the world's oil artery, occupying Kuwait and either threatening or controlling Saudi Arabia. But the victory over Saddam had seemed, finally, both easy and incomplete. And the end of the Cold War, instead of helping Bush politically, seemed instead to eliminate one of the reasons for keeping Cold War–era leaders like him in office.

All these things contributed to Bush's demise. In the end, he still might have been re-elected had the economic recovery that had seemed more than once to be underway actually come. But it didn't, and the effect on the public's mood and the President's popularity was devastating. When he did finally attempt to address the issue, his credibility had been deeply eroded by his broken tax promise and by the long period in which he seemed oblivious to the economy's condition. When he talked of his plans to stimulate growth, they made little impact on voters correctly skeptical that he could get them through Congress. His complaints about the "gridlock Congress" only reinforced that impression. Besides, the President never seemed fully convinced himself that legislative intervention was what the economy needed. And he might have been right. So he ended up running for re-election in hard times he had been slow to recognize, with a program he didn't seem deeply to believe in. The hard times themselves might have been enough to seal his fate. With the other political baggage he had to carry, they proved overwhelming. The final irony is that as the last votes were counted, the economy appeared at long last to be picking up. Just in time to allow Bill Clinton to usher in George Bush's recovery. ❐

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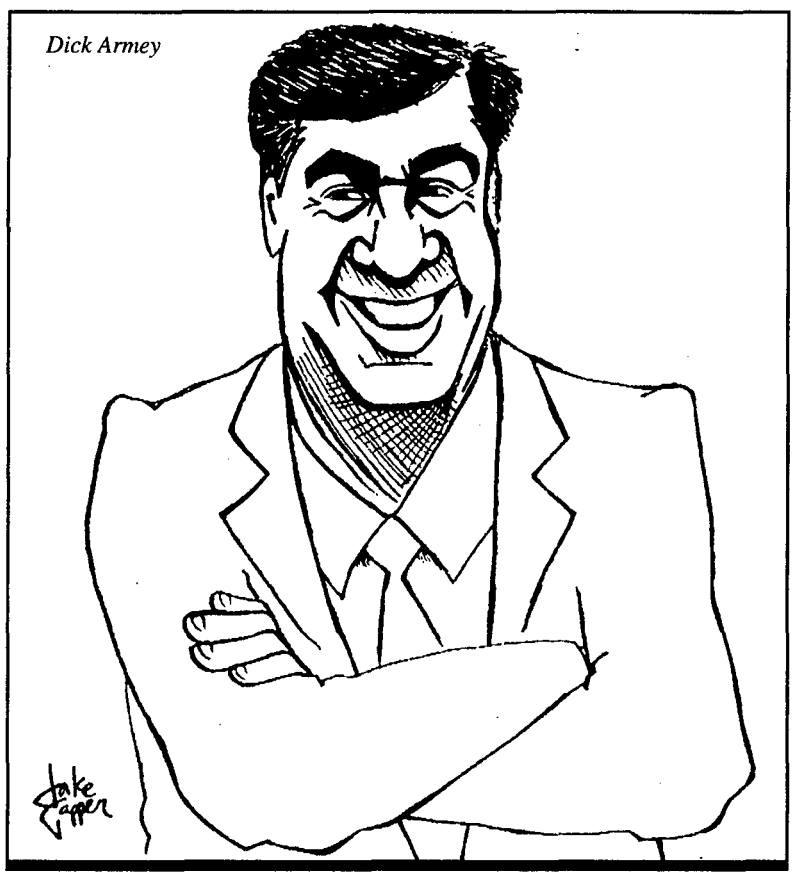
Grover Norquist

It's My Party . . .

Upcoming elections for the leadership of the Republican National Committee and key congressional posts will determine whether the GOP settles for the embarrassed and embarrassing politics of the 1992 campaign.



George Bush was a successful commander-in-chief, but a failure as a party leader. He managed the decline of the Soviet empire and crushed the fourth-largest army in the world, but he left the Republican party weak. The coalition that gave the Republicans three presidential victories in a row was ignored, ill-used, and betrayed to the point where 27 percent of Republicans and 35 percent of conservatives voted for Ross Perot or Bill Clinton.

Debates on how the Republican party can patch back together the Reagan coalition—low-tax, small-government, and traditional-values conservatives and supporters of a strong defense—now begin with the question of *who* will lead such a restoration. Robert Dole has offered himself as the leader of the Republicans in the Senate, and hopes to graft the Perot voters to the Bush voters of 1992 and reconstitute a 57-percent governing majority. One wonders, however, if Bob Dole, one of the negotiators of the 1990 tax increase, can be a credible leader of the Reagan coalition. Dole never understood the low-tax, pro-growth strategy of Ronald Reagan and Jack Kemp. He shares Ross Perot's obsession with the deficit and would cheerfully walk back into a negotiating room to raise taxes in return for promised spending cuts. The Republican party has been taken on this ride in 1982 and 1990. Exit polls and the results of tax-cutting initiatives demonstrate that the party and nation are firmly against higher taxes.

Senator Phil Gramm of Texas would like to be a leader of Senate Republicans, but as an architect of the 1990 budget deal, he is tied to the failures of the past. Thus weakened, he was able to win re-election as chairman of the National Republican Senatorial Committee by only one vote over Mitch McConnell of Kentucky.

Grover Norquist is president of Americans for Tax Reform.

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In the absence of strong leadership in the Senate—and in the absence of a strong presidential contender such as Ronald Reagan between 1976 and 1980—many Republicans are looking to the House Republican leadership to provide a strong Republican voice in opposition. But when Bob Michel decided not to retire, he disappointed some of the more activist members of the Republican caucus in the House. Newt Gingrich, who won an insurgent campaign to become whip in 1989, has worked to move Michel into a more confrontational political position, while calming the fears of House Republicans who are frightened by anyone courageous (crazy?) enough to take on and topple both Speaker Jim Wright and Tony Coelho. But Michel is still Michel. To the dismay of some young Turks, Gingrich has promised Michel that he will not run against him for the position of Republican leader this year. Another possible challenger, Henry Hyde of Illinois, is temperamentally unsuited to such a challenge. Both Gingrich and Hyde have made it clear, however, that should Michel choose to move over to a ranking position on an important committee, such as Appropriations, they would like to be considered by their peers.

The most important race for the future of the House Republicans is the contest for Republican Conference chairman, a post currently held by Jerry Lewis of California. With a staff of fifteen, it is the institution through which the Republicans in the House get together to vote on resolutions that define party positions.

Dick Armey, the feisty former economics professor from Texas, is challenging Lewis. Prior to the election, Armey announced that he had a majority of the votes of Republicans. The election demographics helped, as twenty-six of the thirty retiring Republicans were Lewis supporters. Armey and Lewis have clashed before, and past conflicts are an indication of just how big a shift replacing Lewis with Armey would represent. In 1990, Armey led the call for a revolt of House members that resulted in a two-to-one vote putting the Republicans on record against any tax increases. The vote took place July 18 and was correctly read by the White House and the press as a warning from House Republicans that they would not support the tax increases Darman was then cooking up with the Democratic leadership.

Lewis repeatedly refused to allow Armey's resolution to come to a vote. A year earlier he had dragged his feet on an identical anti-tax resolution. Each time, Armey went to the effort to get fifty signatures of fellow House Republicans—thus requiring Lewis to bring the resolution up as soon as possible.

Over Lewis's extralegal delays, Armey forced a vote on the resolution that made headlines around the country, reminding voters that the House Republicans—if not the President—remembered they were the anti-tax party. The *New York Times* headline read: "Defying President, House Republicans Vote Opposition to Tax Rise."

Armey is well remembered as the congressman who cut the Gordian Knot on military base closings by fashioning a vote to empower a bipartisan commission to recommend a list of obsolete bases to be closed, consolidated, or downsized. Its initial list of bases to be closed will save the taxpayers $700 million each year. The process was so successful that the Pentagon has institutionalized it. Now, every two years, the commission will recommend more bases to close. Setting the vote in odd-numbered years removes charges of partisan politics and allows all members to vote unsuccessfully to stop the closure of bases in their districts. Armey's commission has worked so well that some of Clinton's more moderate advisers are looking to replicate it to save costs in the agricultural extension agent offices and other departments.

Armey's commission has worked so well that some of Clinton's more moderate advisers are looking to replicate it. . . . It is just this success that rebuts criticism that Armey is a mere partisan battler.

It is just this success that rebuts criticism that Armey is a mere partisan battler.

Lewis serves in the present leadership meetings as a supporter of Michel's worst instincts: to cooperate with the Democratic majority and avoid fights. But his days are numbered. In past years, Lewis had a tremendous advantage in his campaigns for reelection as Conference chairman. He had served as the California representative on the Committee on Committees, which decides who will serve on what committee. Lewis would cast as many votes as there are Republican members from California—a total of nineteen out of 187 votes.

Thus Republican members of Congress who wished to get a good committee assignment were well advised to promise to vote for Lewis for Conference chairman, and they did. But in 1991, for many of the same reasons that Armey is challenging Lewis today, the conservative California delegation stripped Lewis of his powerful position on the Committee on Committees and gave it to Ron Packard. This happened only days after Lewis had won reelection as Conference chairman in return for promises to help those who voted for him in his capacity as California's representative on the Committee on Committees. Packard was besieged by fellow members, who asked if their deals with Lewis were still good with him. When Packard asked Lewis about this, Lewis denied

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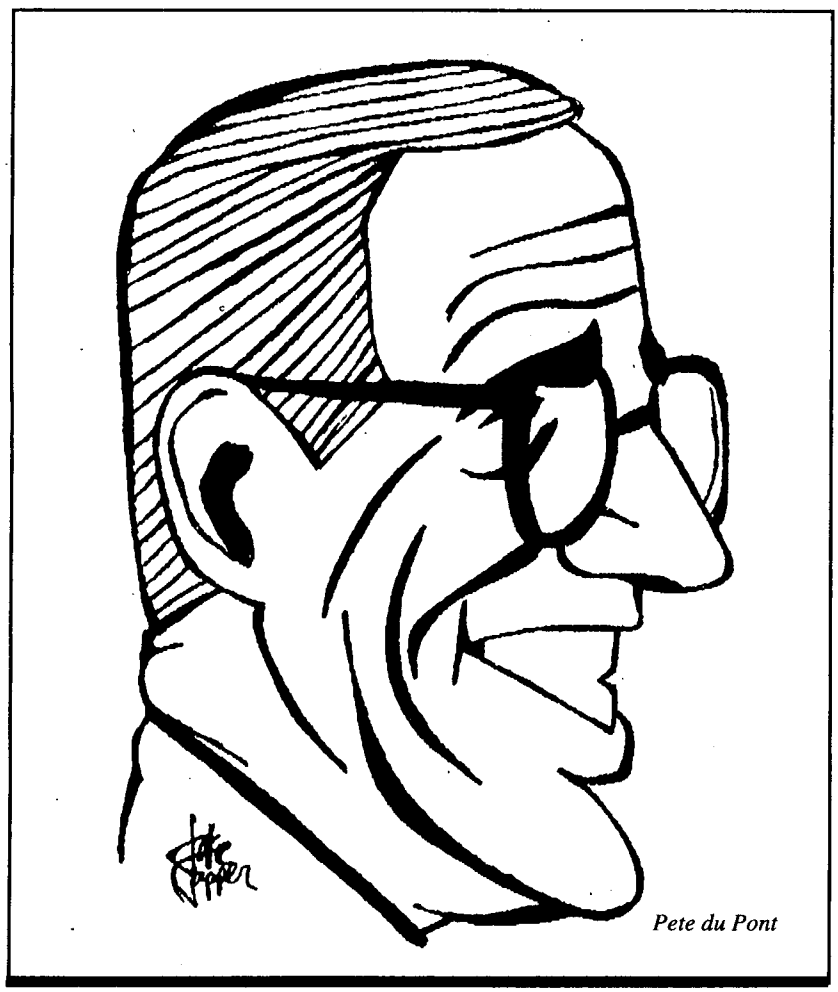
that there were any deals at all. Members who remembered their conversations with Lewis differently were not pleased.

A second key race pits Tom DeLay of Texas against Willis D. (Bill) Gradison of Ohio for the job of Secretary of the Republican Conference, made vacant by the retirement of Vin Weber. Gradison represents both the moderate wing of the party and the non-confrontational Bob Michel style of leadership. DeLay, like Armey, is an aggressive conservative who fought the 1990 budget fiasco. He co-authored the 1991 DeLay-Wallop tax-cutting legislation, which would have cut the capital gains tax, rolled back the Social Security tax increase, and speeded up the depreciation for business investment. The legislation once again put the conservative House and Senate Republicans on the record as favoring lower taxes and pro-growth legislation. Facing Democratic and White House opposition, the legislation did not pass, but it put down a Republican marker and began to reclaim the tax issue for Republicans.



Pete du Pont

Faced with the possibility of a House leadership that consists of Bob Michel surrounded by Newt Gingrich, Dick Armey, Henry Hyde, and Tom DeLay, the moderates, led by Steve Gunderson and tax pledge breaker Fred Grandy, have offered a novel reform: Why not elect only two leadership positions, the minority leader and the whip? (Thus protecting Michel and Gingrich.) The other leadership positions would be appointed by Michel. This, some hoped, would lead to the appointment of moderate—in tone and principle—members who could never get elected on their own. The idea was floated and defeated just before the election, but is certain to resurface.

It is worth a great deal of effort to outside conservative groups and would-be House Republican activists to ensure that Dick Armey and Tom DeLay join Gingrich and Michel in the leadership. Gingrich would be cheered and encouraged by the reinforcement, and Michel would find it easier to confront the Democrats. Conservatives remember how successful Newt Gingrich, Vin Weber, and Bob Walker were as backbenchers organized in their Conservative Opportunity Society in defining an activist forward-looking Republican agenda.

Once the House and Senate Republican leadership is settled by mid-December, the party will then focus on who will replace Republican National Chairman Rich Bond. The 165 members of the RNC—three from each state and territory—will meet in St. Louis, Missouri, on January 28-29 to elect Bond's replacement.

When Republicans hold the White House, the job of RNC chairman is managerial—raising money, recruiting candidates, and keeping the party structure together. As Ron Brown of the Democratic National Committee has demonstrated over the past few years, in the absence of a President, the party chairman can become an effective spokesman for the party and help set its direction and tone. Thus, the RNC chairmanship is about to emerge from the shadow and become a very important position, rivaling the leadership of the House and Senate Republicans.

A number of would-be chairmen have offered themselves, or have been suggested: former Governor Pete du Pont of Delaware, former Minnesota congressman Vin Weber, outgoing Labor Secretary Lynn Martin, NRCC chairman Spence Abraham, Mississippi Committeeman Haley Barbour, political consultant Charlie Black, and former Secretary of the Army Bo Calloway.

The RNC chairman has three important duties. First, he must be a spokesman for the entire party, unifying the coalition that won in 1980, 1984, and 1988. Second, he must be technically competent in party-building. And third, he must avoid being seen as the tool of one or another potential candidate for 1996.

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The first task of any chairman will be to undo the damage of the Bush presidency in losing the tax issue. Opposition to tax increases is, in Phyllis Schlafly's phrase, "the unifying principle" of the Republican party. All members of the coalition share a commitment to limited government and reduction in the tax burden. To this end, the new chairman must be able to denounce the 1990 budget deal without reservation, and support the original Republican platform passed in Houston, which called for repealing the tax hikes in Darman's 1990 agreement and denounced the deal as a "mistake."

Of the above-mentioned possible chairmen, Vin Weber has begun to take himself out of consideration by discussing his plans for organizing an activist think tank or a "Heritage for the 1990s." Charlie Black and Haley Barbour are too closely identified with the Phil Gramm candidacy for the presidency in 1996, as well as with the mistakes of the Bush era. Spence Abraham acquitted himself admirably as the executive director of the NRCC, is strong on the tax issue, and works well with the entire coalition. Gramm's people may complain about his ties to Quayle and Kemp.

A Lynn Martin candidacy would be interesting. In 1991 and 1992, the Republican National Committee unanimously passed resolutions introduced by Virginia Committeeman Morton Blackwell urging the Secretary of Labor to enforce the Supreme Court decision *Beck* v. *Communication Workers of America*. Dozens of House Republicans wrote to Martin demanding the same. Martin refused to enforce the law—protecting union members from paying compulsory dues used for political purposes—until the Bush campaign called her on the carpet in Spring 1992. Enforcing *Beck* would have taken hundreds of millions off the table, instead of leaving it available for use against Republican candidates. It would be laughable to imagine Lynn Martin standing before a group whose resolution she had not even acknowledged. It is worth noting that the 1988 and 1992 Republican platforms call for the implementation of *Beck*. Some party loyalist.

The du Pont candidacy would be accompanied by a commitment that du Pont would not run for President in 1996. This would greatly reduce the fears of some that he might use the position as a springboard. And he might be acceptable to Kemp, Gramm, and Pat Robertson, as he is known to have been a strong opponent of the 1990 budget deal and is a free-market conservative who is sympathetic to the concerns of social conservatives.

Du Pont also has a record as a technically proficient party builder—he founded GOPAC to help identify, train, and elect Republicans to state legislatures and to Congress. When du Pont ran for President in 1988, he resigned as general chairman of GOPAC and handed the organization over to Newt Gingrich. (This election cycle alone, when many Republicans were strapped for cash, GOPAC provided $1.6 million to House challengers.)

Rich Bond elevated the du Pont candidacy to a new high when he included in a November 6 letter to all RNC members a paragraph that reads:

> In an act of absolute political treachery, former Governor Pierre "Pete" DuPont [sic] of Delaware began campaigning for the RNC Chairmanship several weeks before election day. It's disloyal, unseemly and cowardly to put one's own ambition before the good of the Party and our President and that is exactly what Pierre did. Please bear this in mind when he contacts you for your vote.

This personal attack was bizarre, as du Pont was *not*, in fact, campaigning for the RNC position, and most of the others listed as possible chairmen were long ago having discussions about their futures—including the possibility of Rich Bond's job.

Alone in the list of possible party chairmen, Pete du Pont publicly and actively opposed the 1990 budget deal.

The last paragraph of Bond's intemperate letter might explain the intensity of the White House–directed attack. Bond writes: "We can't let our opponents 'Carterize' George Bush. . . . He is 'one of us'—a GOP county chairman and a National Chairman and he deserves our undying loyalty, respect and support."

It was du Pont who in 1988 said:

> George Bush heroically followed America into war. And he skillfully followed Richard Nixon into China. And he somewhat less enthusiastically followed Ronald Reagan into the modern economics of tax cuts and job creation. But the question is: In a Bush Presidency, who would lead America? So far we haven't seen any vision, any principles, any policies.

Alone in the list of possible party chairmen, Pete du Pont publicly and actively opposed the 1990 budget deal that Ed Rollins points out cost the Republicans some twenty-four house seats.

Any successful RNC chairman or candidate for the presidency in 1996 will have to repudiate the 1990 budget agreement. The Republican party cannot regroup until that deal and the breaking of the no-tax-increase pledge have been exorcised. There *is* the stench of betrayal and treason in the air, and it comes from the biggest betrayal of all: George Bush's decision in 1990 to tear the heart out of the Republican coalition. ❐

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Tim W. Ferguson

. . . And I'll Cry if I Want to

California leads the way—down.

Bruce Herschensohn

Los Angeles

Conservatives in most parts of America come off the 1992 election disappointed but fatalistic. They watched a bad marriage bust up and are hoping it doesn't cost them too dearly. In California, however, it's more like clinical depression. Conservatives lost their most articulate of all candidates for the U.S. Senate in a head-on fight with a beatable left-wing opponent; lost one seat in the state Assembly in a year when redistricting threatened the hold of Democratic speaker Willie Brown; won only twenty-two of fifty-two congressional races, when suburbanization and racial gerrymandering were supposed to give them a majority of the delegation; and crashed and burned on a referendum to control spending.

Those setbacks wiped out years of planning and dreams, and even worse, undermined the idea that a combative, ideological stance is effective in countering the "statist quo." They summoned an awful, unspoken fear not felt since the Goldwater aftermath of 1964: that perhaps the majority of the electorate, on the cutting issues, really is liberal-socialist after all.

Tim W. Ferguson is the Los Angeles-based "Business World" columnist for the Wall Street Journal.

It was the sad-eyed visage of Senate hopeful Bruce Herschensohn that brought the most tears to the right on the morning after. He had waged as intellectual a serious campaign as it is possible to run for major elective office, against Barbara Boxer, whose voice, manner, and votes in the House of Representatives are as pleasing as listening to her manicured fingernails streak across the proverbial chalkboard. The aging cheerleader won the race 48 percent to 43. (Minor parties generally draw 5 to 10 percent of the vote in California races.)

Herschensohn refused to blame George Bush for his loss, as of course he was perfectly entitled to do. Instead, he blamed only himself. There was truth to that only in that he wasn't what he never promised to be: a fund-raiser, a glad-hander, a pork-promiser. He was a television commentator and documentary producer who loved ideas and the Constitution, but not politics. Nevertheless, his sincerity was appealing enough to have brought him and his economic libertarianism (exception: military spending) to even-steven on the virtual eve of the election. Then he stepped in some excrement that Boxer's running dogs had left in his path: evidence of his patronizing a nudie place or two in his hometown of Hollywood. This, a social conservative—even one who wasn't preachy about it—ought never to do. Boxer

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also brought in a late half million bucks from somewhere to hit him with ads about colorful comments he'd made along the line, such as the crime-suppressing value of honest citizens armed with Uzis.

Herschensohn was the more substantive of the two on nearly any topic, which is one reason Boxer dodged debating with him nearly to the end. (Only after he started hammering at her 143 bounced checks and carving away at her early lead did she engage.) The gravitas gap was evident in every forum: One trade newsletter printed their responses to questions on banking regulation, surely a subject no dearer to him than her. Yet his answers were consistent and not canned; he agreed with the industry's objections to several specific controls but wouldn't go along with its wish to saddle competitors (credit unions, for instance) with similar baggage in order to "level the playing field." Boxer kept replying that sure, she favored a sound banking system.

She won, as did many others, because she was a Woman and a Democrat. Herschensohn's numbers consistently tracked and exceeded those of John Seymour, the nonideological nominee for the other Senate seat, through nearly every demographic group. Working women voted 70 percent against both.

Perhaps the majority of the electorate, on the cutting issues, really is liberal-socialist after all.

The same headlong tendency of the stockinged set was evident in district races. The South Bay area of Los Angeles county, long a Republican redoubt, rejected almost all the GOP candidates, conservative or otherwise. Money from public-employee unions poured into several of the races when polling discovered that redistricting—the presumed Republican salvation—had served primarily to reduce name recognition by putting the party's incumbents in unfamiliar territory. Trial lawyers in some districts lent their offices for use as Democratic phone banks. The late push, including effective "hit" mailers, helped bring easy wins for some left-liberal (lady) Democrats. Even Joan Milke Flores, a pro-life but otherwise nondescript politician who'd done the Free World the favor of knocking off Maureen Reagan in the GOP primary, lost her congressional race to a woman lawyer who'd worked for Jimmy Carter.

If the female force was the big reason for the Republican debacle, it had help. A big turnout by the young drove home the message that, whatever magic Ronald Reagan might have spun with this group, the years of influence by MTV and public-school teachers have succeeded in molding another Kennedy generation. (It didn't help that no jobs were created for them under Bush.) Many of their parents, or their elder siblings, had seen their home values fall 20 percent in the California recession, which helped put them in a surly mood, too. Blacks and Jews, as usual, voted big-time against the GOP. And organized labor, particularly teachers and nurses, was hell-bent for Democrats.

The public-employee onslaught was masterfully orchestrated by Willie Brown and his consultants, but what triggered it was the great Sacramento budget standoff of last summer, when Gov. Pete Wilson ultimately humbled the Democrats after pushing the schools and the hospitals and the rest of the "social service" world to what they kept telling us was the edge. Wilson won some cuts and the promise of more reductions in subsequent years.

Even those won't be enough to square the California deficit, so the governor came up with Proposition 165 to slash welfare benefits, give his office more authority to curb and control the budget, and cut off pay to both the executive and legislative sides if they gridlocked again. It sounded like a sure winner, but instead became the lightning rod for massive registration and get-out-the-vote efforts of every interest group that perceived Wilson as an enemy. Meanwhile, the need to defeat a soak-the-rich tax plan that the left qualified for the ballot drew millions of business bucks away from both Wilson's Prop. 165 and the Republican legislative slate. Ultimately, the governor's fiscal disciplinary device went down in flames with his party, his Senate candidate (Seymour), and the Bush campaign that he chaired.

Days afterward, Wilson was talking about cooperation with the legislature again, just as he had in his first year, when together they raised taxes more than $7 billion. Because California's budget plight remains desperate, especially if some of the long-run cuts achieved this year are overturned, taxpayers can only cringe. But in Wilson's defense, it must be said he tried being tough and the voters seemed to hold it against him. He stiffened his spine, as conservatives demanded that he do, and got his block knocked off for it. The right bought into his act in 1990 and will in one way or another be the prisoner of it in 1994. Neither camp's fortunes look too promising.

To Barbara Keating-Edh, one "scary" aspect of the 1992 vote was the strong support for protecting welfare benefits that are nearly the highest in the country. A former official of the Conservative party in New York State, Keating-Edh was another casualty of the Willie Brown operation. She lost 51 percent to 49 in an Assembly district in the northern San Joaquin Valley, reaching over to Yosemite National Park. Turnout in her district was 81 percent, compared to a predicted 65 percent. She said she got more votes than she expected—the Christian right proved a force—but her opponent, a school board member whose husband and children all work in the schools, simply overwhelmed her.

Public-employee and trade unions financed Keating-

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Edh's defeat. The California Organization of Police and Sheriffs, which wants votes for pay increases, sent out a telegram-like mailer warning that the Consumer Alert organization she headed, a market-oriented group with industry support, was engaged in "fraud." Ralph Nader spoke against her at nearby Stanislaus State University, and the McClatchy newspaper chain hammered her as a religious fundamentalist, though her platform was economic. But the killer was the welfare vote rallied to oppose Prop. 165. It even showed itself among the supposedly rugged "hill people" on the Sierras side of the district, leaving her to lament the pervasiveness of the modern dole.

Keating-Edh had a $500,000 war chest and was expected to win. She said she won't try again because she could never raise such support from cowed business lobbies against an incumbent. And she doubts too many other quality candidates will come forward unless the "incredibly libelous" mailers of the Democrats' alliance are curbed. This is unlikely, given that Willie's wrecking crew and the state party, under its crafty chairman Phil Angelides, are just gaining speed.

An even gloomier assessment comes from Tom McClintock, the premier idea man among the GOP congressional hopefuls. An Assembly member who's been the biggest thorn in Gov. Wilson's right flank, he met Rep. Tony Beilenson in what was considered a toss-up coastal district linking Los Angeles and Ventura counties. He was outspent and trounced, 56 percent to 39, caught up in "the undertow as the [USS] *George Bush* went down," as he puts it. McClintock also was effectively separated from much of his party base by negative ads that began in his hotly contested primary and were carried through effectively by Beilenson, an old pro from the Democratic wards of Los Angeles's westside.

Although he had staked out his independence from the governor on the tax increases of 1991, McClintock regards himself as partly the victim of Bush and Wilson on that score: "The voters simply wanted to shoot every Republican in sight." (Actually, two GOP candidates for the legislature won in parts of the congressional district he sought to represent.) And he thinks the well is poisoned through 1994, no matter whether Wilson himself runs or not. One reason: the budget battle will resume next year, with either the 1991 result (tax increases) or the 1992 one (a long, painful standoff). Neither course helped the Republicans this time around. McClintock, who's been consistently right about the fiscal prospects, sees a $10 billion gap to be filled in 1993, bigger than this year's.

With all this gloom, who on the right could be upbeat? Rep. Christopher Cox of Orange County, re-elected with 65 percent. He claims the California returns are indicative of a conservative electorate, especially if you add six percentage points to the Republican line to compensate for the drag at the top of the ticket. (President Bush's abandonment of California may have hurt voter follow-up efforts, although in districts such as the South Bay's, Republicans went to the polls and opted for Democrats.) Adding six points, you get Herschensohn in, and close to a 26-26 split of the congressional delegation. Further, says Cox, the vote on most of the thirteen propositions reflected fiscal conservatism.

What of the failure of Prop. 165? A vote against Wilson, largely out of fear he would cut the schools more, Cox says. Like many suburban Republicans, Cox is caught on this issue—his voters want more money for their children's classrooms. His out is to say that a school-choice voucher would alleviate this concern and end the ability of teacher unions and administrator groups to hold the learning of youngsters hostage in lobbying for ever more funding. A voucher initiative would have appeared on this ballot but for some apparent signature tricks by the opposition, and Cox says it would have passed if 1992 had been a normal political year.

Gov. Wilson stiffened his spine, as conservatives demanded that he do, and got his block knocked off for it.

As it is, the voucher measure will be on the June 1994 ballot, when Cox may be seeking the nomination to oppose Sen. Dianne Feinstein, so time may tell. But here the case for GOP optimism is stretched. School choice lost by 2-1 this time out in Colorado, just as it did in Oregon in 1990. The public-school establishment has found "no tax money for religious schools" to be an effective refrain. Beyond that, voters in affluent districts like Cox's are afraid choice will mean lots of poor, minority kids in the better neighborhoods' schools. The dangerousness of the issue is a reason Pete Wilson hasn't touched it. Without it, the governor lacks strong alternatives to cutting school budgets or raising taxes. Those who want him to do neither—and apparently this includes the majority of voters—have nothing to suggest if vouchers aren't going to be approved. Those voters wouldn't even okay cuts in welfare. Result: more feuding and frustration through 1994 and, if this year is any indication, more blame placed on Wilson and the Republicans.

The party has been lower—it had twenty-three assembly seats after Watergate versus thirty-two now—but it has rarely had less to look forward to. Nearly all the ammo has been spent, and Kathleen Brown, the state treasurer and heir to a dynasty that has bedeviled the GOP, is poised to waltz into the governorship. Wilson's ability to draw campaign cash out of a business sector beset by bitter recession is not to be underestimated, and he can be expected to share some of it with his legislative sympathizers. But as George Bush learned this year, it is hard to resist a clamor for divorce from a miserable electorate if you have no more roses to offer. And in California, the alimony payments are steep. ❐

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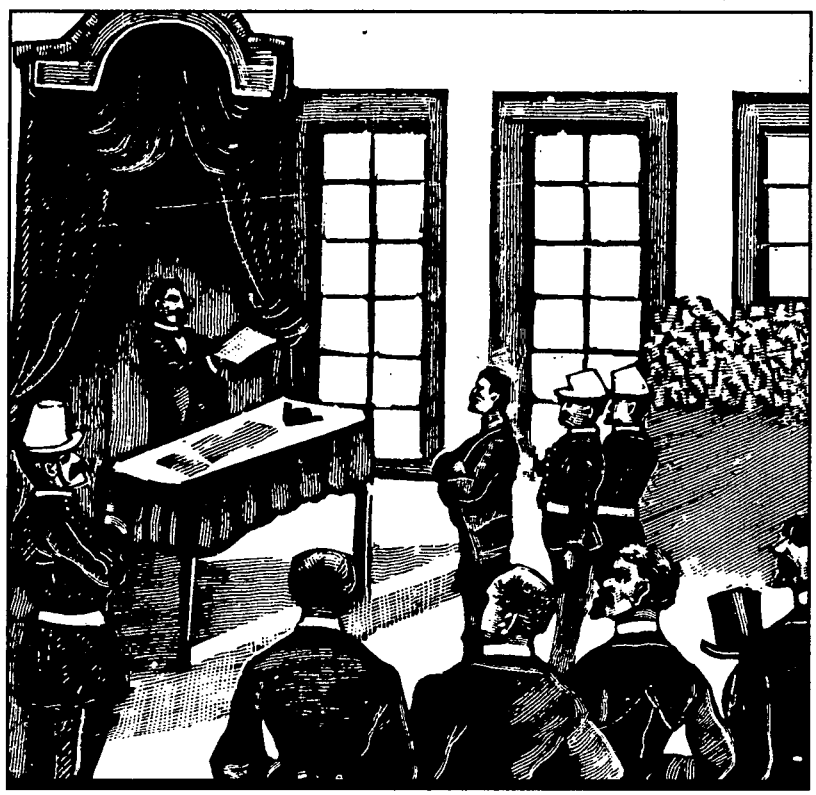
Daniel Wattenberg

Harvard's New Interior Minister

Luis Carrión was responsible for numerous political murders in Nicaragua. Now he's studying at Harvard courtesy of the U.S. taxpayer.



In 1981, Tomás Borge brought bureaucratic order to political murder in Nicaragua. Exasperated by the "anarchical fashion" in which the regime had been dispatching opponents since the July 1979 revolution, the interior minister and ruling Sandinista junta member promulgated a secret directive governing the application of "special measures," or extrajudicial killings. Under the new order, authority to approve "special measures" would be limited to Borge himself and his Ministry of the Interior (MINT) deputy and fellow junta member, Luis Carrión Cruz. And in the years that followed, Carrión would not flinch: after defecting in 1985, Alvaro Baldizón, who had supervised internal MINT human rights investigations for Borge, implicated Carrión directly in the executions of hundreds of political opponents.

Hundreds of bodies may lie buried in Carrión's past, but Harvard likes his future. As a result, U.S. taxpayers are helping to put Carrión through graduate school. Carrión is spending this year at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, earning a masters' degree in public administration in the school's Edward S. Mason program for Third World leaders in mid-career. Because Harvard offers no funding to Mason fellows, students must secure it from other sources, often foundations or their own governments. On the strength of Carrión's admission to Harvard, the Organization of American States awarded him one of its highly competitive Special Training scholarships, which pays his tuition, travel, and books. The U.S. is the largest contributor to the OAS, providing 59 percent of its annual budget.

Carrión was one of only 400 scholarship winners from an OAS applicant pool of 5,000 last year, but an OAS fellowship specialist is quick to defend the award. "We are not ethical judges, we are judging the academic credentials only," he says. "We don't run a CIA here. . . . It doesn't say that because he's a violator of human rights he cannot be granted a scholarship in our regulations."

While it is true that the committee rendered no ethical judgment, it is doubtful that they rendered an indepen-

Daniel Wattenberg's "The Lady Macbeth of Little Rock" appeared in our August issue.

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dent judgment of Carrión's academic credentials. He spent his senior year at the Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire, then attended Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York, for a year before dropping out. Back in Nicaragua, he entered the University of Central America. But when questioned recently by the U.S. Delegation to the OAS, the meritocrats from the OAS evaluation committee admitted they did not know if he had graduated from there, or indeed if he had any undergraduate degree. They also tried shifting the blame to the Nicaraguan government, claiming Carrión had received the "warm endorsement" of his foreign ministry. But José Tijerino, the Nicaraguan OAS ambassador, insists Carrión received no more than a pro forma endorsement.

I have heard conflicting reports about his intellect. His cousin, Arturo Cruz, Jr. says, "He is very bright—no doubt about it." Before Exeter, he went to high school at the prestigious Christian Brothers school in Nicaragua. There, he distinguished himself as "the best student in the country," says Cruz. On the other hand, recent soundings taken by the U.S. ambassador to the OAS, Luigi Einaudi, indicated he was a "dunce."

In reality, the OAS decision was dictated by Harvard's acceptance of Carrión. Harvard refuses to discuss its criteria for admitting the Comandante, a cum nada graduate from nowhere. Steve Singer, the Kennedy School's communications director, won't say whether Carrión was sponsored or actively recruited, but he is unmoved by arguments that indirect taxpayer support for Carrión's Harvard education implies some accountability on the university's part. "The beef," he says, "is with the OAS."

No: the beef is with Harvard. The pork is with the OAS.

Harvard refuses to discuss its criteria for admitting the Comandante, a cum nada graduate from nowhere.

Now, a review of some of the qualifications Carrión may have omitted from his applications. Under Borge and Carrión, the Cuban-trained MINT grew into a 15,000-strong internal security conglomerate. Its State Security Directorate (DGSE) operated a string of prisons and clandestine jails where political opponents were held incommunicado and tortured (Nicaragua's independent human rights–monitoring group, the CPDH, estimated the regime held 7,000 political prisoners in 1986). In its report on the Nicaraguan human rights record for the years 1986-89, Amnesty International gave a good description of the inhumane conditions and "white torture" typically suffered by detainees:

> During 1986 and 1987 there were persistent reports of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and inhuman conditions of detention, particularly in rural detention centres. Many testimonies referred to detainees being held in isolation for days and weeks at a time in stifling, cramped and unlit concrete cells.
>
> Frequent use was made of cubicle-sized cells known as *chiquitas* (tiny ones). Some detainees have said that these cells were so small that they were unable to sit down, the floor space measuring little more than one square metre. The cells are described as being almost completely dark, with minimal ventilation and no provision for sanitation. Some prisoners allege that they have been held alone in such cells for periods of more than one week, being taken out for interrogation under bright lights at irregular intervals of day or night.
>
> Some detainees report that immediately after their arrest they were deprived of food for days at a time, and sometimes of water too. Beatings have also been reported. Forms of psychological pressure clearly amounting to torture have also been alleged, such as the use of weapons to threaten prisoners and mock executions, threats of indefinite detention or that the detainee will be made to "disappear," and false reports that members of the detainee's family are also in detention or are liable to arrest.

By infiltrating political parties, unions, and business groups, the DGSE monitored and manipulated the opposition and fomented disunity within its ranks. During the 1985 national elections, its Department of Agitation and Propaganda first unleashed its "divine mobs" of paid lumpenproletarians to terrorize opposition rallies with baseball bats and steel-reinforced flagpoles. The same department censored the independent media and published the FSLN party daily, *Barricada*.

In 1981, the DGSE began operations against the Catholic Church—wiretapping, surveillance, and disinformation and slander campaigns—in hopes of building up a rival "popular church" preaching liberation theology. Carrión planned, along with Borge and State Security (DGSE) chief Lenin Cerna, a notorious 1982 secret police operation to publicly humiliate Father Bismarck Carballo, the Catholic Church's spokesman and director of its Radio Católica. Maritza Castillo Mendieta, an agent in the DGSE's Department of Ideological Diversionism, sought Carballo out for "spiritual guidance," claiming she was suicidally depressed because her husband had abandoned her. After several visits by Father Carballo, she urged him to come to her home one night, saying she was distraught. After arriving at Castillo's home, Carballo was struck on the head by a DGSE agent and forced at gunpoint to strip. DGSE agents dressed as regular policemen waited outside, and when the agent inside the house fired several shots, the fake policemen stormed the house. A Sandinista television crew and a Department of Agitation and Propaganda *turba* converged on the scene, and the "police" paraded the naked Carballo into a squad car. Sandinista television and print media ran pictures of the nude priest who had seduced a distraught member of his flock. →

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GUATEMALA'S MASON FELLOW

Luis Carrión Cruz is not the first Central American accused of human rights violations to be awarded a controversial Mason fellowship at Harvard. In 1990-91, Guatemalan General Héctor Gramajo attended the Kennedy School under the same program. On his way to pick up his diploma he was handed a multi-million dollar lawsuit by a process server from the New York–based Center for Constitutional Rights. Filed in U.S. District Court in Boston, the suit sought damages against Gramajo for "acts of summary execution, disappearance, torture, cruel inhumane or degrading treatment, wrongful death, false imprisonment and intentional infliction of emotional distress . . . carried out under his orders against Guatemalan civilians."

Gramajo ignored the suit. He spit on the process server who handed him a second lawsuit a week after graduation. "Eventually I'm going to get a judgment for millions of dollars against him, assuming that the judge finds he has subject-matter jurisdiction," says Michael Ratner of the Center for Constitutional Rights.

Both Nina Shea of the Puebla Institute and Douglas Payne of Freedom House have been even-handedly critical of both the Gramajo and Carrión fellowships, but there are also some important distinctions between the two cases. As Defense Minister, Gramajo was a stalwart defender of Guatemala's transition to democracy, earning particularly good democratic karma by putting down two military coups against the elected civilian government of President Vinicio Cerezo.

And there is nothing resembling Baldizón's inside-the-secret-police account, which ties Carrión directly to particular executions. The case against Gramajo centers on his ultimate responsibility as Army Vice Chief of Staff for torture and killing committed by soldiers under his command and is built on evidence gathered by outside human rights groups like Americas Watch. "It's a little more than that," says Ratner. "There were seven particular provinces in Guatemala [where] he was actually the commander in terms of what they were doing from 1980 to '82, and it was a very closely run operation at a time in which they destroyed 400 villages in Guatemala. So it wasn't just like saying the police commissioner is responsible for the guy on the beat. It was a much closer nexus." But Ratner admits the plaintiffs never produced documents or witnesses implicating Gramajo personally in specific executions or acts of torture. "When he defaulted, then we didn't actually have to go to proof on it," he says.

While not acquainted with the Carrión case, Ratner says he'll insist on a single standard. "I don't have any political ax on that one way or another. If there's real facts on somebody, I go after him. Torture doesn't have any political boundaries." —*DW*

Alarmed by eroding popular support for the Sandinistas, MINT began conducting secret opinion polls in the mid-eighties for internal use. A story has it that one showed popular support for the government had plunged to around 20 percent. Upon hearing this, Borge observed icily, "No problem. We can keep power with 5 percent." And that was Commander of the Revolution Carrión's job description at MINT during the Sandinista reign: Building the party's capacity to maintain control no matter how unpopular it became.

But the case against Carrión goes far beyond his ultimate responsibility for the crimes of secret police officers acting under his direction. Until defecting in 1985, Alvaro Baldizón was Chief Investigator of MINT's Special Investigations Commission. Beginning in 1982, the Inter-American Human Rights Commission (IACHR), the human rights arm of the OAS, began sending detailed allegations-cum-information-requests to the Nicaraguan Foreign Ministry regarding the fate of missing Nicaraguans. These were passed on to MINT, the institution implicated in the allegations, for responses.

Before he could throw sand in the eyes of international human rights monitors, Borge needed an internal mechanism for uncovering the truth. Trained in criminology in the Soviet Union, Baldizón "was assigned by Borge to track down all accusations made by the IACHR," says Douglas Payne, Central American analyst at Freedom House. "Tomás Borge said, 'I want to know the truth, I want to know it privately, secretly.' And he assigned [Baldizón] to do it, so then Borge would be able to concoct his response."

Americas Watch spent much time pecking at Baldizón's story. But this is the same group that based its Nicaraguan political prisoner estimates on Red Cross figures—which did not include those held in State Security prisons, because its people weren't allowed to visit them. "While Americas Watch tried to poke holes in some of the hazier parts," says Payne, "I found quite astounding the picture he did paint in detail of an entire operation, with names. It really did not overturn his credibility as to the overall picture, and [Baldizón] himself admitted that 'I am going on memory, and there is a lot of material I'm giving you.'" Baldizón has since died, of food poisoning in a Los Angeles restaurant. The L.A. coroner's "determination that there hadn't been any hanky panky involved was probably correct," says Payne. "But that doesn't mean there wasn't any, because the Sandinista people who performed 'wet' operations were trained by the best in the world—the East Germans and the Soviets."

According to Baldizón, in late 1981, Borge signed an order called "The Standardization of the Application of Special Measures Against Elements of the Enemy Potential and Criminal Potential Throughout the National Territory." Under the order, "special measures," or assassinations, were to be undertaken only against people whose detention was not public knowledge, and the authority to request the use of

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"special measures" was restricted to a handful of trusted, high-ranking MINT officers. And "special measures" were to be applied only after obtaining the approval of Borge or Carrión.

A 1986 State Department report on the Baldizón revelations cited Carrión's complicity in the following assassinations:

• In early December 1982, DGSE officers imprisoned 20-year old Ramón Heberto Torrente Molina, suspected of recruiting and serving as a courier for the armed resistance. After Carrión approved the "special measures" requested by the MINT Delegate for Region II, Comandante Guerrillero David Blanco Núñez, the youth was executed by DGSE officers in a dry stream bed off the road between Chinandega and León. Borge ordered Baldizón to investigate following an IACHR complaint, and after receiving his report, said he had forgotten that Carrión had approved the killing. "Killed attempting to escape," went the official story.

• In November 1983, Baldizón investigated the case of a Nicaraguan farmer, Paster Cruz Herrera, another case pressed by the IACHR. After his arrest by state security near the town of Pantasma in Jinotega in February 1983, Cruz was transferred to Las Tejas, a DGSE prison in Matagalpa. Sub-Comandante Javier López Lowerli requested "special measures" because he had no legal case against Cruz. Carrión approved, and Cruz was executed in April 1983 along with three other prisoners. Baldizón submitted his report on the case in December 1983.

• In 1983, the CPDH and IACHR published lists of more than 300 farmers who had been reported missing following MINT/Sandinista army counter-insurgency operations in the areas around Cua, Pantasma, Waslala, and Río Blanco. In response to sustained pressure from area residents and the human rights groups, Baldizón's office was ordered to investigate. More than 300 farmers had been executed, they reported in June 1984. In 80 percent of the executions, Sub-Comandante López had received Carrión's approval to apply "special measures." Borge named a special prosecutor to take legal action against those responsible. Three high-ranking MINT and party officials implicated in the murders were transferred, while lower-level security personnel were charged and soon released.

In 1981 Carrión assumed control of Sandinista relations with the Miskito Indians of Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast, a portfolio he held until 1985. Carrión was instrumental in the Sandinista campaign to break down traditional patterns of Miskito life and absorb the community into a nationwide system marked by Marxist-Leninist forms of political organization, property ownership, and

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ideology. Sandinista troops and Cuban teachers and doctors poured into the region's 225 villages. The Sandinistas marched tens of thousands of Miskitos off to relocation camps (dubbed Tasba Pri, "Promised Land" in Miskito, by the Sandinistas) and destroyed their evacuated villages.

"This was the most tragic time of Miskito Indian history," says Armstrong Wiggins, head of the Indian Law Resource Center. And Managua's Viceroy for the Atlantic Coast was Carrión. "He is directly responsible, not just for the destruction of Miskito Indian villages, the burning of the Miskito Indian churches, the relocation of the Miskito Indian people, but he was in charge of planning of the destruction of the Miskito organization called MISURASATA," says Wiggins.

While Sandinista control of food distribution provided leverage over the nation's non-Indian populations, the Indians were largely self-sufficient. "There were no ways for Sandinista or Marxist-Leninist ideas to get in there," Wiggins explains. "So what Luis Carrión and his cronies—[DGSE chief] Lenin Cerna and the East Germans and the Cuban agents—organized was how to infiltrate their people into the community structure. And the only mistake we made was that we wanted education so much that we failed in a way by letting these Cuban teachers come into these communities as teachers. . . . So they brought them in en masse, and they were all security forces from Cuba trained to deal with the Indian issue."

The Indians organized armed resistance, crossed the border into Honduras, and rebelled. After sustaining heavy losses during a July 1982 Miskito military offensive, Sandinista military and internal security forces retaliated against Miskito civilians around the towns of Puerto Cabezas and Seven-Bank. Many Miskitos were captured by security forces and summarily executed. When foreign governments and international organizations pressed the government in December for information about hundreds of missing Miskitos, Borge ordered an investigation by Baldizón's office. The investigators found a copy of an October 1982 report from the ranking MINT officer in Puerto Cabezas, Sub-Comandante Jose González, to Carrión. González reported to Carrión that in addition to forty Miskitos killed in combat, 200 had been imprisoned and 150 had been executed in accordance with decisions reached by a joint commission from the Defense and Interior ministries that had been formed to decide the fate of the captured Indians.

"We are not ethical judges," says one OAS fellowship specialist. "We don't run a CIA here. . . . It doesn't say that because he's a violator of human rights he cannot be granted a scholarship in our regulations."

How, then, to defend Carrión's Harvard fellowship? One could argue that, for better or worse, the Sandinistas will remain a force in Nicaraguan politics for the foreseeable future. While the party's leadership remains in anti-democratic hands, calls for internal party democracy and the renunciation of violence have made some soft ripples among the rank and file, and Carrión himself has gone public with some second thoughts. It could be argued that a Harvard scholarship is a reasonable price to pay to cultivate Carrión as a potential leader of the Sandinista democratizers against the unregenerate Leninism of Tomás Borge and the out-of-the-closet *caudillismo* of the Ortegas.

In the summer of 1990, while the Sandinistas emerged from post-electoral trauma, Carrión made a veiled attack on the regime's agricultural policies and religious persecution. His admission that, in effect, the contras weren't "mercenaries" after all was a stunner. "In the end, the contra was a campesino movement with its own leaders," he said. He explained that agricultural policies "such as the establishment of checkpoints on the highways to guarantee, coercively, that the campesinos would deliver their production to the state at the official price" had driven an important sector of the rural population, landowners and landless alike, into rebellion:

> Some campesino sectors felt that their claims were fulfilled by the agrarian reform, but others—even those who had no land, especially in the remote agricultural zones, in the best cattle-producing areas—they felt threatened for fundamentally ideological reasons. The hope of many of them was to become like the landowners affected by the agrarian reform, and in some way, these sectors interpreted this as a denial of their own chance one day to become large landowners themselves. I think another factor . . . was the confrontation between the revolutionary government and leaders of the Catholic Church and some Protestant churches. They did a great deal of work in the countryside where religion has much greater weight than in urban areas and in the Pacific region in general.

But while there might be an argument that it's worth biting the bullet to educate a Sandinista leader in democratic politics, nobody involved in the Carrión fellowship has yet made it. When asked whether he intends to return to politics in Nicaragua, Carrión says only, "Yeah, maybe." He declines to say whether he is still a Marxist-Leninist.

As Carrión crams for his mid-terms, human rights groups in Nicaragua are still discovering mass graves filled with victims of the Sandinistas. But don't expect Harvard or the OAS to fund their excavation of the Sandinistas' legacy of terror with a research grant—they're betting on the future. ❐

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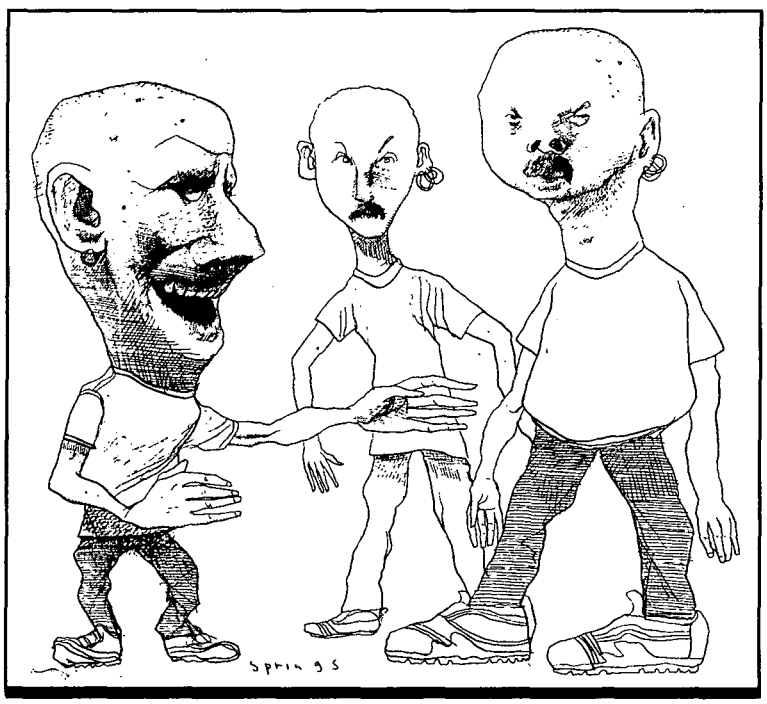
David Horowitz

The Queer Fellows

"Queer theorists" on American campuses are resurrecting the Marxist project—with sex, not class, as its target. For the new academic radicals, the enemy is not just heterosexuality but the idea of gender itself.



A specter is haunting the American academy, the last refuge of the political left. It is the specter of "queer theory." Amidst the din and clatter of utopias crashing messily to earth, the true believers are once again burnishing the agendas of social revolution. From Berkeley to Cambridge, lesbian and gay activists busily work to unveil the latest weapon in the intellectual armory of the tenured left. "Queer politics is no longer content to carve out a buffer zone for a minoritized and protected subculture," an academic manifesto proclaims. Its goal is "to challenge the pervasive and often invisible heteronormativity of modern societies." Says the *Village Voice*: "It isn't enough to become parallel to straights. We want to obliterate such dichotomies altogether."

The "dichotomies" are already being obliterated in liberated zones of the popular culture. A *San Francisco Chronicle* reviewer describing Michael Jackson's international video *Black and White*, which was seen by half a billion youngsters across the globe, waxes messianic:

> The refrain in the *Black and White* video is "It doesn't matter if you're black or white." Most riveting is a computer-enhanced segment where a person changes ethnicity and sex in rapid succession. . . . In a world threatened by racial tensions and overpopulation, the survival instinct could summon a new human, one who has no single race and who, by being . . . androgynous, is less subject to the procreative urge.

The task (in the words of the previously cited manifesto) is "to confront . . . modern culture with its worst nightmare, a queer planet."

As novelist Saul Bellow observes, "The idea is to clobber everything that used to be accepted as given, fixed, irremediable." For the new radical theorists, the enemy is no longer a ruling class, a hegemonic race, or even a dominant gender. Instead it is the sexual order of nature itself. Oppression lies in the very idea of the "normal," the order that divides humanity into two sexes. Instead of a classless society as the redemptive future, queer theorists envisage a gender-free world.

Queer revolution is thus the ultimate subversive project: it proclaims the death not only of Society's God, but also of Nature's Law—the very idea of a reality beyond human will. For these revolutionaries, not even biology grounds possibility or can limit human hope. Theirs is the consummate Nietzschean fantasy: a world in which humanity is God. On this brave new horizon, humanity will realize its potential as a self-creating species able to defy its own sexual gravity. The future will give birth to a

David Horowitz is co-editor of Heterodoxy, *published by the Center for the Study of Popular Culture in Studio City, California.*

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new revolutionary people, no longer male and female, but queer.

The century behind us is littered with the corpses of millions who died on the cross of such new worlds. Before the collapse of the Communist empire, the quest for a "new man" and "new woman" consumed the lives of entire nations. But the effort to produce a super race created instead an unprecedented monstrosity, whose horror was nonetheless predictable. Indeed, it *was* predicted by contemporary critics of Lenin and Marx, who saw how the revolutionary ideal bore within itself the seeds of its own undoing.

For behind the revolutionary pursuit of an impossible ideal lurks a deep hatred for the human norm and an unquenchable desire for its annihilation. The inhumanity of the Communist ambition was what made its epoch so evil. Self-hatred is the root of the Communist ideal, a lesson too easily ignored. The totalitarian state was not an aberration of the progressive spirit, but its apotheosis. If the agenda is to erase the human past in order to remake the human soul, then totalitarian terror is the necessary means.

Why should anyone have expected anything different?

The future will give birth to a new revolutionary people, no longer male and female, but queer.

The paradox of progressive intentions and reactionary consequences is as old as the left itself. It springs from Rousseau's fantasy that social institutions are the root of all evil, which is the fountainhead of radical theory. It is the idea that human reality is "socially constructed" and thus can be socially molded to virtuous ends by a vigilant (and armed) political elite. Although they affect an intellectual superiority to their Communist forbears, the new campus puritans seek an identical result: the redemption of humanity through political power.

For Marxists, the key to this power was the proletariat, a majority class. Oppressed by its lack of property, the proletariat could accomplish its liberation only by the abolition of property. This revolutionary act would re-constitute as a liberated class not only the proletariat, but all social classes.

No one believes any longer in the revolutionary myth of the proletarian international, but Marx's discredited paradigm has been resurrected by his epigones in the American academy. The fulcrum of this revival has been the development of post-Marxist theories that substitute other "oppressed" groups—blacks, women, and homosexuals—for the missing revolutionary term. Behind each of these theories lies a version of the constructivist idea: the social construction of a race, class, or gender creates the premise that it is socially "oppressed." Thus women have been historically excluded from certain roles not as a result of biological realities—for example, the hazards of childbirth before the development of modern medical techniques—but because "patriarchal society" has *defined* their roles in order that men can oppress them.

It should be obvious that radical theory is, in fact, a radical depreciation of the humanity and dignity of ordinary people. Only the successful are historical subjects; the rest are mere objects of others' "oppression." In the radical view, society reflects neither nature nor history, and individual human beings have no complicity in their historical fates. They are mere social creations.

The same constructivist fallacy creates the revolutionary potential of all those categories valorized and simultaneously depreciated by radical theory, i.e., stripped of their free will and reduced to the status of historical objects. It is their destiny to be reshaped and redefined by the radical vanguard. But because they were mere objects in the historical past, they are also objects in the radical future. This, in capsule, is the totalitarian story, and the animating theme of all radical theory.

All theoretical relativisms, beginning with Nietzsche and culminating in Derrida, have this absolute in common: there is no objective value, no natural standard, no insurmountable obstacle to human desire. This is the intellectual ground of a leftism that—to paraphrase Lenin—is an infantile disorder. As one queer writer recently summarized:

> In this age of deconstruction, the notion that sexual identities are "essential"—that is, constituted by nature—is under attack [by revolutionary theorists]. Identity—in terms of race, ethnicity, gender or sexuality—is no longer seen as stable or even coherent; but as variable, provisional, and most of all constructed.

In *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality*, David Halperin, a leading queer theorist, describes the contribution of the father of structuralism: "Foucault did for 'sexuality' what feminist critics had done for 'gender.'. . . He divorced 'sexuality' from 'nature' and interpreted it, instead, as a cultural production."

If sexuality is a "cultural production" and can be shaped to fit a conscious design, what area of human endeavor or desire cannot? Like their predecessors, the Doctor Frankensteins of the newest left are intoxicated with the prospect of brave new worlds. Their agenda is to make a racist, sexist, homophobic humanity into a liberated entity in their own image. This is a secular idolatry identical to that of the Communist apocalypse.

Ironically, the point of entry for the revived radical impulse in the United States was a traditionalist movement for social reform. The civil rights movement, under the leadership of Martin Luther King, was guided by a conservative agenda. Its goal was to include black Americans in the existing social contract, especially in the segregated South, where the constitutional covenant had been restricted to whites. King's dream was the American dream: inclusion and opportunity for all. *E pluribus unum.*

King's victories were achieved under the banner of "inte-

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gration" into the very system that radicals despised. It was the worst nightmare of the rejuvenated left. As soon as the civil rights movement achieved its goal of ending legal discrimination, the radicals acted to push King aside. Led by racist demagogues like Stokely Carmichael, the new left rejected King's leadership (deriding him as "Uncle Martin") and embraced the violent racism of Malcolm X. The banner of integration was replaced by the call for separatism and "black power." The new political goal—"black liberation"—was defined as liberation *from* the American dream. Underpinning the new vision was a bastard version of the old paradigm, as the discredited Marxist categories were recast in racial terms.

The problem with this new paradigm was that it lacked the basic coherence of its Marxist predecessor and, except as a rationale for destructive agendas, made little political sense. Once the idea of a universal class was discarded, there was no logical cutoff for new pretenders to the revolutionary throne. Women, "Latinos," homosexuals, and Native Americans vied for possession of the victim's mantle. No reflexive embarrassment seemed to restrain them as they rushed forward to compare their own discomforts with the historic sufferings of American blacks. Even college students—among the most privileged of America's social ranks—experienced no difficulty in nursing their grievances into a revolutionary apotheosis, captured in the title of a sixties tract called *Student as Nigger*.

Their agenda is to make a racist, sexist, homophobic humanity into a liberated entity in their own image. This is a secular idolatry identical to that of the Communist apocalypse.

But the most determined and successful claimants were radical women. Led by activists whose outlook had been shaped in Marxist polemics, radical feminists quickly appropriated the moral aura of the civil rights epic. Developing what came to be called a "politics of identity" (in contrast to the old politics of class), the feminists turned to the Marxist patriarchs as an intellectual source. From the poisoned well of the Communist past, they drew not only the specific terms but the general forms of their social analyses, creating a parodistic version of what had long been a bankrupt creed.

In a typical "contribution" to the new feminist theory Catherine MacKinnon crudely substituted sexual categories for Marx's economic terms, ignoring the absurdities that this intellectual sleight-of-hand inevitably produced. "As work is to marxism, sexuality [is] to feminism," she wrote in her pretentious opus, *Towards a Feminist Theory of the State*. To provide a theoretical underpinning, she simply abandoned the dialectic of history that had provided Marxism with a complex if erroneous view of human praxis, favoring a vulgar Lamarckism in which environment not only determined but actually created gender: "The molding, direction, and expression of sexuality organizes society into two sexes: women and men." This is now the prevailing "explanation" of sexual identity in elite universities across the United States.

No sooner had radical feminists grasped the revolutionary laurel, however, than the hierarchy of the oppressed asserted itself *within* the revolutionary ranks. Bisexual activists claimed a more revolutionary status than comrades who were straight; lesbians rebelled. "Heterosexual sex," complained a lesbian theorist (and former Trotskyite) "is a site for male dominance that Marx ignored." (No doubt a shrewder one of his judgments.)

To establish their primacy in the revolutionary pecking order, radicals came up with a catchy slogan: *Feminism is the theory, lesbianism is the practice.* Catherine MacKinnon turned this into academese: "If feminism is the epistemology . . . lesbianism is the ontology."

The collision of feminist factions was replicated throughout the radical ranks. Lesbians clashed with gays. To provide an exit from the impasse of this political fragmentation, the idea of "queer" was proposed as a unifying concept. "Queer" posited a universal sex to replace the absent universal class.

To the constructivist, all identities, gay *and* straight, are the product of a socially imposed ideal—heteronormativity—which also structures the system of oppression. This is the gender-patriarchy system through which heterosexual males oppress women and gays. In MacKinnon's formulation: "Women and men are divided by gender, made into the sexes as we know them, by the social requirements of its dominant form, heterosexuality, which institutionalizes male sexual dominance and female sexual submission." It is the task of the sexual revolutionary to overthrow the norm that structures this oppression.

In its queer formulation, the radical project appears to reach its outer limit, realizing what the young Marx might have called its species essence. For the concept of queer is really the modern revolutionary idea distilled into crystalline form as the cry of the Unhappy Consciousness: *That which is normal oppresses me.*

To the rest of humanity, the institutional forms of capitalist democracies appear as liberating structures in whose environment individuals can achieve, breathe free, and realize their desires, without engaging in anarchy and chaos. It is the Hobbesian dilemma resolved. Liberty ordered by the rule of law, and market constraints. To the alienated radical, however, democracy is a diabolical form of social oppression because of the freedoms it permits; because it appears to be free, while failing to live up to radical expectations.

To the post-modern left, the institutional forms of capitalist democracies are not at all triumphs of an evolutionary process, nor reflections of the reality of who we are. To radicals, democratic government is not "a reflection on human

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nature" (as the authors of the *Federalist* maintained), but an instrument of class/gender/race oppression that social liberators like themselves are obliged to destroy.

But in this malevolent confrontation with democratic societies, radicals are confronted with a serious dilemma. Because democracies, like America's, are founded in conservative views of human nature, they embrace their opponents. Democratic societies institutionalize change and accommodate the unexpected. The reform of institutions is written into law as a necessary part of the democratic process, just as tolerance for difference is its central value. Not only do democracies not suppress their opposition, but they provide a haven even for those who hate the System. The democratic founders understood the inevitability of second thoughts.

It is this very principle of tolerance that queer revolutionaries and radicals most reject. For it is this rejection that defines them as radicals. For them, tolerance itself is repressive because it denies their most cherished illusion: that they are the authentic voice of humanity, and theirs the universal political solution.

Radicals, in short, do not want integration into a democratic system or equal status in a democratic state. Nothing could be more self-defeating than to be counted one among many. For radicals, accepting the idea of a democratic norm—or any norm at all—is merely to collude in one's own oppression; to embrace a "false consciousness" in place of a revolutionary vision. "Formally, the state is male, in that objectivity is its norm," explains the author of an essay titled "Fear of a Queer Planet." In this radical conception of human freedom, the revolutionary goal is a queer state where norms no longer exist. At the recent tenth anniversary conference of the National Council for Research on Women, its feminist president cited the term "unwed mother" as an example of "androcentric" bias because "it presupposes that the norm is to be a *wed* mother." Heteronormative, androcentric, Euro-centric: for the radical, the very idea of the normal community—the non-queer—is the mark of its oppression.

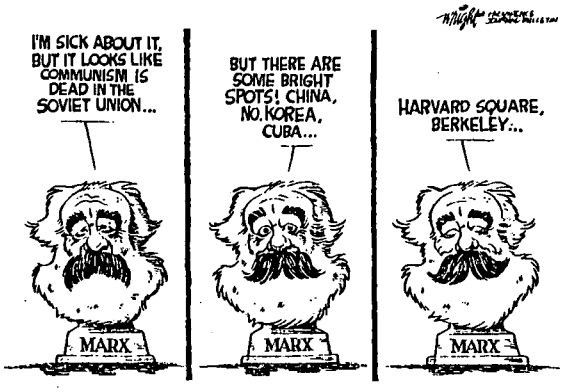
Normality can be a descriptive term, a proscriptive term, or both. A "normal procedure" in medicine or in public health is a procedure that is *usually* prescribed. It is usually prescribed *because* it has been previously tried and proven successful. It is by trial that we arrive at methods, procedures, institutions, laws, that bring our efforts into conformity or coherence with the orders of our nature.

When homosexuals object to the term "abnormal," they are objecting to its proscriptive use—for example in the claim that homosexuality is unnatural or immoral or should be illegal. As a matter of description, homosexuality appears to be both a fact of nature and abnormal. According to the best statistics available, between two and five percent

How about a little Glasnost on American college campuses?

Over 30 years ago, in Moscow, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev jabbed his finger into the chest of then-Vice President Richard Nixon and said, "Your grandchildren will live under communism." Nixon replied, "Your grandchildren will live in freedom."

Looking at college and university campuses in America today, it seems that they were both right!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MARX

In the wake of the tremendous political, economic, and social upheaval in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc, the American campus is about the only place the Marxists can call home. While it may not be communist, the indoctrination and tactics of "political correctness" that some students are forced to endure is similar to the old systems cast aside by the people's revolutions against communism.

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of a population will be homosexual in any given society, whether that society is tolerant or intolerant of homosexual behavior. Studies of identical twins indicate that upbringing has little bearing on homosexual development. The conservative conclusion will be that homosexuality is normal in that it is rooted in nature, but that socially it is abnormal in that the vast majority of people are not and will never be homosexually inclined.

But description in this sense does not necessarily lead to proscriptive conclusions. The claim that homosexuality is socially abnormal does not lead to any conclusion as to whether it is immoral or not. Such conclusions must be a matter of individual principles and communal preferences. Many communities and religions do view homosexuality as immoral. These attitudes may be "oppressive" to homosexuals, but no more so than are Christian attitudes towards Jews as souls condemned to eternal damnation. Jews can live with this attitude in a society that protects their rights and invokes tolerance of difference as its central virtue: *E pluribus unum.*

The ideal of American pluralism—the political norm that governs the behavior of its citizen democrats—is the necessary embrace of diverse communities: even communities in fundamental conflict. The pluralistic norm of American democracy requires that the deviant community and the abnormal citizen (black, homosexual, immigrant, Jew) be equal before the law and enjoy the same inalienable rights as everyone else. To violate this norm, to break the law of America's social contract, is to invite terrible consequences, as the bloodiest and most shameful pages of America's history attest.

The demand that homosexuality should be made illegal is not a matter of mere communal prejudice or individual preference. It is a demand that violates the social contract and its pluralist imperative, and runs counter to the very idea of America's unity as a nation.

But it is the normal "civil rights" solution to the problem of minority status, integration into America's civic foundation, that homosexual radicals reject. In rejecting America's normative institutions, while radically inventing the social future, however, they invite just those retributions that have historically attended the systematic violation of natural order. In so doing, they have created their own social Frankenstein, even without achieving state power, in the contemporary epidemic of AIDS.

Who would not have known in 1969, the year of "Gay Liberation," for example, that promiscuous anal sex was unsanitary for individuals and a potential danger to public health? Yet, gay liberation was defined by its theorists as just that: promiscuous anal sex, a challenge to the repressive "sex-negative" culture of what queer theorists now call "heteronormativity," i.e., the heterosexual and monogamous norm. In the radical view, existing sexual norms reflected nothing about humanity's historic experience, but were merely a social construction to preserve the privileges of a dominant group.

Like black radicals before them, gay activists rejected the idea of integration into a civil order. Gay liberation was identified with a sexual agenda that did not seek civic tolerance, respect, and integration of homosexuals into the public order of bourgeois life. It was defined instead as a defiant promiscuity, the overthrow of bourgeois morals and sexual restraints. And, consequently, of bourgeois standards of public hygiene. No natural or moral barriers were recognized to the realization of the radical project.

The effect of this radical agenda was immediate and unmistakable. In the years 1967-1969—the flowering of the sexual revolution—the incidence of amoebiasis, a parasitic sexually transmitted disease, increased *fifty* times in San Francisco because of promiscuous oral-anal sex among gays. Despite the consequences, a Toronto leftist paper defended the practice in an article titled "Rimming As a Revolutionary Act." During the next decade, the tolerant American civil order made room for the sexual revolutionaries. Public officials licensed sexual gymnasia called "bathhouses" and turned a blind eye toward homosexual activity in bookstore back rooms, bars, and "glory hole" establishments, until a $100 million industry flourished by decade's end. At the same time, natural forces asserted themselves with ever more devastating results.

As opportunistic but still treatable infections flourished in the Petri dish of the liberated culture, gay radicals merely increased their defiance. Overloaded VD clinics became trysting places in the liberated culture. In his authoritative history of the AIDS epidemic, author Randy Shilts describes the atmosphere on the eve of its outbreak:

> Gay men were being washed by tide after tide of increasingly serious infections. First it was syphilis and gonorrhea. Gay men made up about 80% of the 70,000 annual patient visits to [San Francisco's] VD clinics. Easy treatment had imbued them with such a cavalier attitude toward venereal diseases that many gay men saved their waiting-line numbers, like little tokens of desirability, and the clinic was considered an easy place to pick up both a shot and a date.

Far from causing radical activists to rethink their agenda, the burgeoning epidemics prompted them to escalate their assault. When Dr. Dan William, a gay specialist, warned of the danger of continued promiscuity, he was publicly denounced as a "monogamist" in the gay press. When playwright Larry Kramer issued a similar warning, he was accused in the *New York Native* of "gay homophobia and antieroticism." At a public meeting in the year preceding

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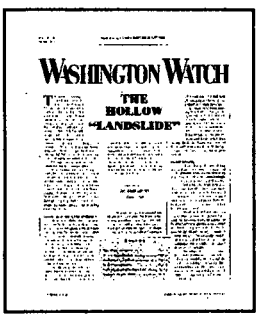

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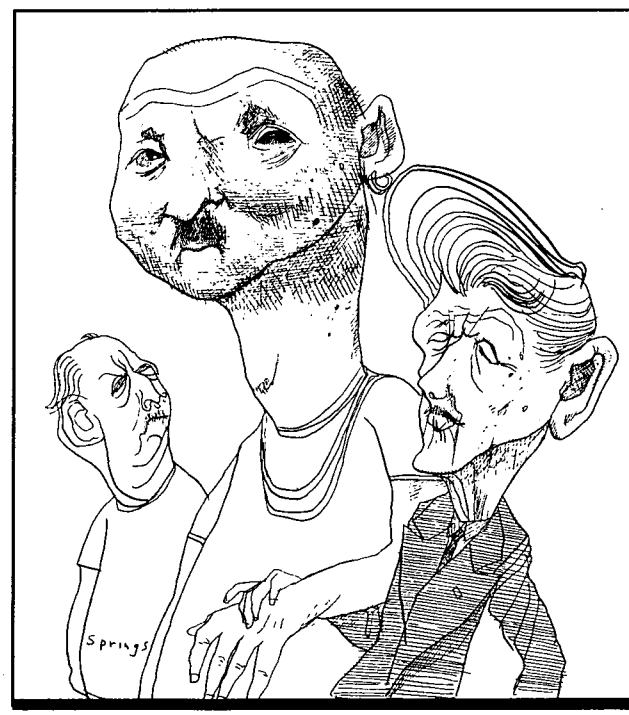
the first AIDS cases, Edmund White, co-author of *The Joy of Gay Sex*, proposed that "gay men should wear their sexually transmitted diseases like red badges of courage in a war against a sex-negative society." Michael Callen, a gay youth present at the meeting, had already had 3,000 sexual partners and was shortly to come down with AIDS. He writes in his book, *Surviving Aids*, that when he heard White's triumphant defiance of nature's law, he thought: "Every time I get the clap I'm striking a blow for the sexual revolution."

Callen's attitude was emblematic. The first clusters of AIDS victims were formed not by monogamous civil reformers who had come out of the closet to demand tolerance and respect, but by sexual revolutionaries who pushed their bodies' immune envelopes to advance the new order. Callen, who later founded People With AIDS, reflected on this revolutionary path:

> Unfortunately, as a function of a microbiological . . . certainty, this level of sexual activity resulted in concurrent epidemics of syphilis, gonorrhea, hepatitis, amoebiasis, venereal warts and, we discovered too late, other pathogens. Unwittingly, and with the best of revolutionary intentions, a small subset of gay men managed to create disease settings equivalent to those of poor third-world nations in one of the richest nations on earth.



The diseases were being transformed as well. As Shilts explains, the enteric diseases—amoebiasis, Gay Bowel Syndrome, giardiasis, and shigellosis—were followed by an epidemic of hepatitis B, "a disease that had transformed itself, via the popularity of anal intercourse, from a blood-borne scourge into a venereal disease."

Where were public health officials, as these epidemics took their toll? Why didn't they intervene, sound the alarm, close the bathhouses, undertake vigorous education campaigns among gays to warn potential victims of the danger in their path? The reason was the revolution itself: So successful was the campaign of the radical activists that it made traditional public health practices politically impossible, particularly when officials attempted to close sexual bathhouses regarded as "symbols of gay liberation." As Don Francis, the Center for Disease Control official in charge of fighting the hepatitis B epidemic, told a reporter: "We didn't intervene because we felt that it would be interfering with an alternative lifestyle."

In the early eighties, the AIDS epidemic was still confined to three cities with large homosexual communities. Aggressive public health methods might have prevented the epidemic's outward spread. But every effort to take normal precautionary measures was thwarted in turn by the political juggernaut the gay liberation movement had managed to create. Under intense pressure from gay activists, for example, the director of public health of the City of San Francisco refused to close bathhouses, maintaining that they were valuable centers of "education" about AIDS, even though their only purpose was to facilitate promiscuous sex.

Not only were measures to prevent the geographical spread of AIDS thwarted by radical politics, but measures to prevent its spread into other communities were obstructed as well. Thus when officials tried to institute screening procedures for the nation's blood banks and asked the gay community not to make donations while the epidemic persisted, gay political leaders opposed the procedures as infringing the "right" of homosexuals to give blood. The San Francisco Coordinating Committee of Gay and Lesbian Services, chaired by Pat Norman, a city official, issued a policy paper asserting that donor screening was "reminiscent of miscegenation blood laws that divided black blood from white" and "similar in concept to the World War II rounding up of Japanese-Americans in the western half of the country to minimize the possibility of espionage."

The result of these revolutionary attitudes was to spread AIDS among hemophiliacs and some heterosexuals. Similar campaigns against testing and contact tracing—standard procedures in campaigns against other sexually transmitted diseases—insured the metastasis of AIDS into the black and Hispanic communities, which now account for more than 50 percent of the known cases.

The war against civilization and nature, which is at the heart of the radical enterprise, inevitably produces monsters like AIDS. The epidemic has now taken a toll of 200,000 Americans, with a million more infected. The implementation of real public health methods is nowhere in sight. Thus, even as the ashes of the Communist empire grow cold, the lessons of the disaster have not been learned. Once in power—as the entire history of our bloody century attests—the radical impulse embraces radical evil in the futile attempt to enforce its rule, and to realize its impossible ideal. The nihilism that rejects nature and the idea of the normal is as blindly destructive as its consequences are predictable. ❐

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We said it. Did you read it?

GRANT'S

INTEREST RATE OBSERVER

Vol. 10, No. 6 30 Wall Street, New York, New York 10005 (212) 809-7994 MARCH 27, 1992

Flying buildings go public

John Templeton, the visionary bull, told a visitor recently (and the visitor told *Grant's*) that the news has rarely been more hopeful and the equity market has rarely seemed more picked-over. With GPA Group plc, the world-league aircraft lessor that plans to go public this spring, there is no such dichotomy. The valuation will almost certainly be too rich while the fundamental news continues to disappoint.

GPA is a credit story as much as a stock story, and it rang a bell with a reader. Suppose, our friend said, Olympia & York had tried to go public two years ago. What would people have said about it? He answered his own question. They would have said it was unique: mysterious, asset-rich, commanding, profitable. They would have called its president a genius and its business plan a blueprint for the future. Its leverage they would have overlooked or endorsed as prudent and enterprising. If someone had objected that O&Y's earnings were dependent on the appreciation of its assets, they would have replied that buildings—O&Y's buildings, at least—do appreciate, because they always used to. If someone had said, what if the credit markets refuse to lend to this brilliant company? the people would not have wasted their breath on an answer.

Now comes GPA with assets that more and more seem to resemble flying office buildings. There are objectively too many aircraft, thousands of new planes are on order (GPA has placed firm orders through the year 2000 for $12.1 billion in new planes and has purchased options for another $9.5 billion's worth of new planes), and airlines have begun to cancel orders. Japanese banks, formerly the leading aircraft financing source, are pulling back, and aircraft prices and lease rates are down. Airline operating losses have recently set records, and surplus aircraft spring up in the desert like cacti. A few weeks ago, McDonnell Douglas jolted the stock market by disclosing how it has contributed its part to the surplus: "Some existing MD-11 contracts contain provisions requiring repurchase of aircraft at the option of the commercial customers. In view of the current market conditions for used aircraft, the company's earnings and cash flows could be impacted by the exercise of these options by airlines."

The GPA registration statement makes for good reading, too, and the issues it raises are universal. They include corporate valuation, credit risk and the state of the world economy. Equity markets are sky high, but private-market values, in general, are not. Real estate is not. Aircraft values, as noted, have fallen—are falling, reportedly—but the airline business is cyclical. "At February 1, 1992," the document says, describing some of the damage done by the rise in airline bankruptcies, "the Group's portfolio included 36 aircraft which were not in revenue service with lessees." Hence, the pressing question: Is the aircraft problem cyclical or secular?

The authorized answer is "cyclical," but you may doubt it, as we do. If you examine the prospectus, as we did, you can lay out the trend of GPA Group's finances and plot its ambitious aircraft-acquisition schedule. Note the rise in indebtedness, the decline in aircraft leasing margins and the rise in aircraft sales margins. Observe the rise in the number of aircraft owned ("aircraft in portfolio"), the drop in number of aircraft sold and the decline in return on assets. Still, however, in the last 12 months, profit from aircraft sales was almost twice as great as profit from aircraft leasing. In the early going, GPA bought a plane only after it had lined up a customer, and in that respect it resembled a cautious real-estate developer. Increasingly, however, it has bought planes on speculation, thereby coming to resemble O&Y....

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Escapes From Clinton's America

A Symposium.

One of history's commonplaces is that the progressive left exalts esoteric pleasures, like ferrets, Frisbee, and macrobiotic food, over basic ones—like dogs, football, and booze.

That makes us nervous. With a Clinton administration looming, The American Spectator *asked some of its more bibulous contributors to suggest great bars of Reagan's reign that might serve as a redoubt of reason in Clinton's.*

RICHARD BROOKHISER

The two bars I will visit most often during the Clinton years will be the same two I visited most often during the Carter-Reagan-Bush years, which are both around the corner from my Manhattan apartment: **Pete's Tavern** and **Tuesday's**. I recommend Pete's to those who are hungry rather than thirsty: they've had a good chef for a few years, and the bar is a zoo. Pete's has the added advantage of being the place where O. Henry wrote "The Gift of the Magi." Tuesday's is quieter, equally good for a burger or a beer.

Both bars will gain added pertinence after Inauguration Day, because they were once hangouts for hangers-on of Tammany Hall. Tammany's last wigwam, or headquarters, stands on Union Square Park, a block away, though it long since passed to other tenants (note the liberty cap on the pediment). Around the base of the flagpole in the park runs a bas-relief contrasting the wretched victims of tyranny with the happy beneficiaries of freedom (i.e., rule by Tammany Hall). I know of Pete's Tammany connection only through reading, but Tuesday's still has a picture of Al Smith on the wall. No pictures of the Tweed courthouse, or the horse farm Richard Croker bought with his ill-gotten gains. Tuesday's gives you *honest* Tammany. The country should be so lucky.

Richard Brookhiser is a senior editor of National Review *and author of* The Way of the WASP.

DAVID BROOKS

In Moscow everybody is a Reaganite; it's just a question of which branch. Some are Elliott Abrams–style anti-Communists, others Jack Kemp tax-cutters. When I walked into the hard currency bar **Night Flight** and saw forty young women displaying their wares in miniskirts and push-up bras, I said to myself, "Oh, this must be the libertarian wing."

Like everything else, the oldest profession is effectively legalized in Moscow. And just as Hayek would have predicted, the free market has imposed its own quality controls. The women at Night Flight are all beautiful and intelligent-looking, and all speak excellent English. The decor is American yuppie, with a dance floor in the back where couples can do their little disco dithyrambs. I sat on the balcony for a better view of the playing field. It was a good fifteen minutes before one of the young women sat down to tell me how handsome I was. She'd been to Tokyo and Rome "on business" and knew a lot about the headquarters of the American Express Corporation in New York. When it became clear that there'd be no sale from me, she made me buy her a drink anyway—tequila and Sprite. I told you these women had class.

The highballs come with long droopy straws sticking out of them. As the men browse around the room, holding their drinks in front of them, it looks as if they're using these flaccid tubes of plastic as divining rods. Four senior Japanese executives gathered four Russian women at their table, and spent the evening giggling to each other like teenagers. A large group of Italian men surrounded one woman and kept shouting at her that she was a *"bella donna."*

Night Flight provides a glimpse into Russia's woes. First, it illustrates the tremendous waste of human capital. These women should be selling real estate or running ad agencies. The next night I had dinner with a former Reaganite, Robert Kagan, who predicted that at some point Russians are going to rebel at the thought of their beautiful women selling themselves to Westerners. These could be the final days in Moscow when things Western have cachet. Bill Clinton had better hurry over.

David Brooks is deputy editorial-page editor of the Wall Street Journal Europe.

RONALD E. BURR

The most important component in keeping *The American Spectator* solvent for twenty-five years has been the staff's

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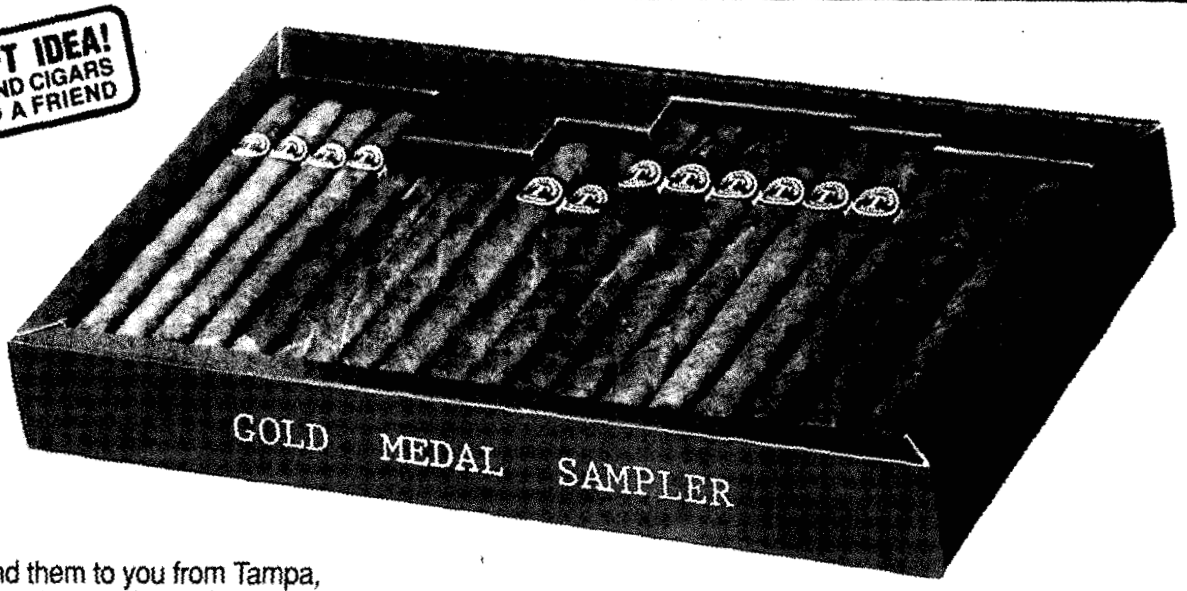

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heavy reliance on alcohol. It is the grease that keeps the gears moving.

When we moved the magazine from Bloomington to the Washington area during President Reagan's second term, we quickly established the **Keyhole Inn** as our new base. The bar was one of the friendliest in the area, since the place was dominated by drivers from the nearby Red Top taxi stand and soldiers from Fort Myer, who wore T-shirts embossed with a parachute and the motto, "Land softly, kill quietly." On the wall hung a laminated news report of Indiana University coach Bobby Knight throwing a chair across the basketball floor, indicating a respect for spontaneity and determination. The only disagreement amongst the customers was on whether our preemptive strike on the Soviet Union should be with nuclear or conventional weapons.

The Keyhole is gone now, another victim of our enemy, the State, which revoked their liquor license because they didn't sell enough food. Where to go now, under the Clinton Regime? How about the **Vienna Inn**? It is, as Bob Tyrrell would say, on the American side of the Beltway. Their chili dogs are the best in the land, and it's full of hard-working and hard-drinking patrons.

Ronald E. Burr is publisher of The American Spectator.

CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

Those who had the good fortune to grow up thirsty in Massachusetts will know of **Maddie's Sail Loft** in Marblehead. For one, it has the best clam chowder in New England—buttery and brothy, with a big pile of tender clams rearing up over the meniscus. For another, it serves sixteen-ounce "see-through" Bloody Marys, Cape Codders, and sea breezes. Don't be alarmed if you come to our town and notice that all the young men drink pink and yellow and lime-green juice drinks. It's just that vodka is the thirst quencher of choice in towns where people drink on their way to work. (Or *back* to work, I should say. It's not just for breakfast anymore.)

Which makes Maddie's political activism in the Reagan era all the more heroic. When the Soviets shot down KAL 007 in 1983, Maddie's boycotted Stolichnaya—its most profitable product—and did not begin selling it again until after the Berlin Wall fell. By which time, of course, George Bush was in office and nobody could afford Stolichnaya anyway.

Christopher Caldwell is assistant managing editor of The American Spectator.

ERICH EICHMAN

When Ronald Reagan was elected President twelve years ago, an acquaintance of mine, a filmmaker who had fled Nazi Europe in the 1930s, decided to leave New York, where he had lived for decades, and move to Paris. He was sure Reagan would start a nuclear war, making New York the target of retaliatory missiles. Thanks to the exchange rate, he lived sumptuously in Paris for several years. He now lives in Normandy. Although politically ridiculous, he is a happy man.

Will a Clinton presidency inspire thoughts of Parisian exile? Perhaps. The Carter presidency almost did: that soft voice, that Southern accent, those homilies about compassion and government programs. We are in for more of it.

In the late 1970s, in Bloomington, Indiana, when Carter was wallowing in "malaise," the *Spectator* crowd used to repair to **Le Petit Café**, just off Bloomington's courthouse square. I suppose going there constituted an "inner exile."

In a sea of university-town looniness, Le Petit Café was an island of sanity. The co-owner and presiding intelligence was Patrick Fiore, a Parisian who came to Bloomington in the early seventies to study music and never left. Visitors to the restaurant soon discovered the pleasure of Patrick's high spirits, Gallic cynicism, and Balzacian prejudices. Marina, his wife, was the genius in the kitchen. She would occasionally visit the dining room, bringing with her that special charm that French women are said to bring with them wherever they go. She was usually there to retrieve Patrick, who would be standing at someone's table making one last point about the Ottoman Empire.

Le Petit Café is still in business (308 W. Sixth Street), ready to receive refugees from Clinton's America. Patrick has expanded the restaurant. Following a nineteenth-century pattern, he long ago colonized the auto repair shop next door and brought the refinements of French civilization to a culturally backward plot of land.

But everything else remains the same: the French provincial fare is as perfectly prepared as ever, and the pleasure of the owners' company remains one of the last great reasons to be alive. Railroad tracks still run by the building; china-rattling trains do, too, occasionally, adding local color. The chairs for which the restaurant is justly famous are as comfortably welcoming as they always were.

The word "malaise" is rarely heard at Le Petit Café, and never mispronounced. If Clinton sends us into one—a malaise, I mean—the cure may be, again, French food and wine. I am hoping the trade war with France continues well past January, culminating in a severe retaliatory action against Normandy's privileged inhabitants.

Erich Eichman is an assistant features editor at the Wall Street Journal.

TIM W. FERGUSON

I don't hang out at the **Mermaid** by the Hermosa pier, because there's too much smoke and too many Harley bikers. The nearby **Poopdeck** is more my style, with picture windows for observing the "bladers" rolling by. Also, **Fat Face Fenner's Falloon**, a few blocks down the beach drag. All are priced for an after-tax Clinton income.

Tim W. Ferguson, "Business World" columnist for the Wall Street Journal, *lives in Hermosa Beach, California.*

GEORGE SIM JOHNSTON

It is election night in the **Fleet Street Pub** on East 45th Street in Manhattan. A group of diehards from the pro-life movement—what the Old Testament prophet meant by a *remnant*—has its eyes on the TV over the bar. They are witnessing an odd but recurring phenomenon. American voters are choosing off the wall a little-known Southern Democrat with wispy vocal chords. After Pennsylvania falls to Clinton, Patrick, the bar's owner and a good conservative Irishman, turns down the volume so that everyone can properly concentrate on his brew. There is a certain satisfaction in contemplating a political debacle over a pint of John Courage, with its slight undertaste of lime. Patrick has made the pub the unofficial drinking headquarters

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of the local pro-life movement and so deserves a medal. While he is not pleased at the prospect of four years of Clinton, the election is not the main thing on Patrick's mind. Just the other day, the Ancient Order of Hibernians pulled its sponsorship of the local St. Patrick's Day parade because of City Hall's demand that the parade include gay and lesbian groups. Fifth Avenue, in other words, will not resonate with marching bands on March 17 because Mayor Dinkins will never, ever do anything to offend gay pressure groups. What would Tocqueville have made of the tyranny of certain minorities? The bartender draws another round of large ones, as the answer to this will involve lengthy elucidations.

George Sim Johnston is a writer living in New York City.

WILLIAM McGURN

Although we in this last outpost of Empire no longer anxiously await the sighting of a mail ship on the horizon for news, it wasn't until the images of George Bush's concession speech flickered across the giant CNN screens in the Hong Kong Marriott that the inevitable sank in. The next day, the former president of the American Chamber of Commerce here, Mr. Bud Williams, a Vietnam vet and stand-up guy, was on the front page of the *South China Morning Post* saying that the Clinton victory made him "ashamed" of being American, and although my own feelings about Bill and Hillary run more to embarrassment, my sympathy was entirely with Bud, for in these dark days our consolations are few. The recent decision of the Anglican Synod to ordain women argues against religion, as does Notre Dame's loss to Stanford. Female companionship is out, too, at least for the moment, because though I have the most beautiful fiancée in all America she also ranks among the wisest in her refusal to cross the ocean until we have crossed the altar. That leaves drink, and Kipling.

In Hong Kong the former means **FCC**, or **Foreign Correspondents Club**. All the establishments in the Crown Colony fulfill the first requirement of a Clinton-era saloon: they fall thousands of miles outside the Zone of Occupation, this notwithstanding regular port calls by the 7th Fleet. True enough, the FCC's clientele is almost entirely hacks, and in normal times this might cost it a star or two off the ratings. But these are not normal times, and as soon as the traditional idiocies underlining Democratic foreign policy become manifest in Asia the general disposition against all things American might for once steer members closer to the shores of wisdom. I daresay that some wit will soon hang a half-burnt draft card right next to the Reuters plaque from the old Saigon bureau and the sad, old photos of the evacuation of the U.S. Embassy.

In short, the FCC makes a splendid vantage point from which to view the Clinton Administration, particularly in its avowed promises to bring us a kinder, gentler China and establish "fair" trade with Japan. And here is where even a nice, stiff what's-good-for-you goes down better with a little Kipling on the side:

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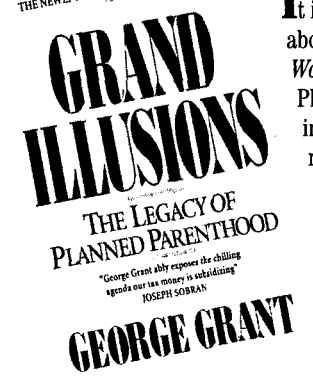
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And the end of the fight is a tombstone white
With the name of the late deceased,
And the epitaph drear: "A Fool lies here who tried to hustle the East."

Cheers!

William McGurn is senior editor of the Far Eastern Economic Review.

JOE MYSAK

I was never asked to join at the feast, but I will welcome the refugees from their bunkers in the White House and on the Hill to the place where I have enjoyed much good cheer during the past twelve years—the only real Wall Street Saloon, **Harry's** at Hanover Square.

These past twelve years have seen me remain Mencken-pure, even as these refugees trooped off to Washington to various posts in the administration, neat writing gigs in the White House, state dinners, rides on Air Force One, and the rest of it. They went, were bitten by the Washington lust, fattened at the trough, and now find themselves bounced. Some made it by connections, a few by talent, the heirs and heiresses bought their way in, and all now believe their sagacity essential to the affairs of state.

I actually sat next to such Turks at the **Old Ebbitt Grill** bar, across from the Treasury building, where I regularly repair after a visit to my Washington bureau. It was the eve of election day and they were sweating, their minds focused absolutely on the awful and ignominious hangman's noose that awaited them in the morning.

Come January 20, they will all bid their wistful adieus. Most will immediately seek the genteel welfare of foundation grants. A few will catch on at the think tanks, writing policy papers that nobody will read. Others will try their hand at syndicated columns, which will dry up and blow away. A few will go out and seek honest work. And a few will think to crash Wall Street.

I will spring for a round for these orphans at my usual stand, the long mahogany bar at Harry's, but only one for these silky frauds and freeloaders, the vast majority of whom rarely pull out their purses to pay for the beer they wish to cry in, and whose idea of a bartender's tip is fifty cents. I know. I have put down a few with these fellows.

They will have a long time to learn. Now these heroes enter the wilderness; now is their sere winter. Harry's can heal. As for me, I will hoist one of Danny's delicious martinis, maybe two, and ponder the irony of fate and the rage of friends.

Joe Mysak is editor and publisher of the Bond Buyer, *and* The American Spectator*'s chief saloon correspondent.*

WLADYSLAW PLESZCZYNSKI

On moving from Indiana to Inside the Beltway seven years ago, we settled in the Clarendon district of Arlington, more commonly called Little Saigon. We ate our first meals at the **Café Dalat** on Wilson Boulevard. Soon after, the **Queen Bee** opened a few doors down, and then the **Nam Viet**, which is around the corner on Hudson Street. All are excellent (always begin with an order of soft Vietnamese rolls, and there's plenty of "33" beer on hand), and the service—if handled by the women—never fails to be congenial and unaffectedly polite. Although I remember once seeing Sen. David Boren, the likable Oklahoma Democrat, picking up a takeout dinner at Café Dalat, you're not likely to run into a Clintonite at these establishments, since none is known to be owned or operated by former members of the Vietcong.

Wladyslaw Pleszczynski is managing editor of The American Spectator.

DAVE SHIFLETT

Here in the nation's interior, the election of Bill Clinton has led to some grumbling among barroom regulars, many of whom see his excessive teetotaling as yet another character flaw. The official excuse—allergies—is highly suspect, perhaps because Bill's tongue is known to be cleft from tip to boot. Some say he's probably an ex-drunk; at the very least, it is odd having a dry in the White House.

Where will we go to escape Bill and the Rev. Ozone? To the places we know. One of the great ones along the Front Range of the Rockies is the **Deckers Resort**, where fly fishermen take a break from chasing rainbows in the South Platte River. The staff at this cozy canyon pub pours with a heavy hand and a light heart, yet fears are at flood stage—and not only because fly-fishing in Arkansas got skunk-poor during Clinton's reign.

This is catch-and-release territory, but if the Clinton tax hikes and inflation get as bad as expected, the South Platte may be transformed into a food source. The suspicion today is that there won't be so much as a minnow left in the river by the fall of '94. Expect us to march on Washington soon thereafter.

Dave Shiflett is deputy editorial-page editor of the Rocky Mountain News *in Denver, Colorado.*

JOHN SPRINGS

In London, I spent most of the eighties in pursuit of Kingsley Amis, whom I drew every month for *Harper's and Queen* as he himself pursued vodka martinis in various watering holes at the magazine's expense. For dry martinis near-perfect, try the **American Bar** at the Savoy.

The **Groucho Club** became a media-ridden meeting point in the Reagan/Thatcher years. Champagne was the drink of choice for types like playwright Keith Waterhouse and myself—and still is. Such was the euphoria that the corks were popping like the buttons on Robert Maxwell's waistband. Heady days.

John Springs is a London-based artist for The American Spectator.

BARON VON KANNON

When Wlady asked me to contribute to this learned symposium, I was eager. The assignment was to write about "a great watering hole of the Reagan years which is still great." Several spots came to mind, but I now hesitate. For one, Ross Perot has said he plans to stay "involved." Should I reveal gathering spots of great conversation and ample drinks, where tongues will be loosened? For another, if word gets out of the location of sources of vast quantities of empty beer bottles, whiskey bottles, and even—fitting relicts of the Decade of Greed—Perrier and chardonnay bottles, can Al Gore's eco-police be far behind? Thanks for the honor, Wlady. But I'll decline.

Baron Von Kannon is senior vice president of the Heritage Foundation, and Kapellmeister of The American Spectator.

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Phoo, Menchú

by Stephen Schwartz

The award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Guatemalan revolutionary advocate Rigoberta Menchú is a multiple score for political correctness, serving not only the obvious aims of Columbus-bashers and unemployed Sandinista groupies, but also those of certain highly placed European meddlers in Latin American affairs.

Menchú has been presented to the world as a human-rights activist, and the Norwegians have chosen to honor her as a symbol of "peace and reconciliation." In reality, she is a major figure in the campaign to impose on the elected, civilian government of Guatemala a political arrangement with the Communist guerrillas of the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG). Rather than representing peace and reconciliation, Menchú stands for continued guerrilla struggle.

In effect, the Nobel committee has put itself on the side of the declining revolutionary left in Central America. Excited at the possibility of imposing a leftist outcome on the political development of a small and faraway country, the Norwegians wish to keep the momentum going, by granting their token indigenous American the most powerful form of moral support available to them. Indeed, last March, Oslo was the site for the first contacts between the legal government of Guatemala and the guerrillas, according to the Mexican news agency Notimex.

Menchú, to emphasize, does not support peace; she supports leftist violence. She does not even *accept* nonviolence as a means of protest. Some media noted, delicately, in the aftermath of her award, that she denies being an actual guerrilla, "but is uncritical of the rebels." As the *New York Times* put it, Menchú has "endorsed insurrection . . . but says she has never belonged to any of the country's guerrilla groups."

In reality, although Menchú herself is unwilling openly to declare herself a Marxist, the narrative she dictated to ghostwriter Elisabeth Burgos-Debray, *I, Rigoberta Menchú*—which has become an element of the politically correct canon on campuses around the English-speaking world—reveals an immense pride in her contribution to "the revolution." (Burgos-Debray, not surprisingly, is the ex-wife of Régis Debray, onetime Che Guevara groupie and hagiographer, and fashionable gadfly of the French Socialist government.)

In a manner reminiscent of Mao, Menchú divides Guatemalan women into four classes: "working-class women, peasant women, poor *ladino* women, and bourgeois women." Is this really the outlook of a typical Guatemalan Indian? Elsewhere, she embraces revolutionary sabotage, acclaiming the action of those who destroy sugar-harvesting machines:

> Our idea is to put into practice the methods initiated by the masses when they evolved their "people's weapons": to be able to make Molotov cocktails.

I, Rigoberta Menchú is so transparent a work of propaganda for armed revolution, it is amazing that so few in the media commented on it following the award. Dinesh D'Souza, in *Illiberal Education* (1991), argued that vocabulary employed in *I, Rigoberta Menchú* is not her own but a projection of the feminist and ultra-radical views held by the transcriber Burgos-Debray. Even C. Vann Woodward, like Régis Debray once a high priest of the left, scoffed at the idea that a transcription of an oral biography by an "unlettered woman"—to use Woodward's phrase—should be received as a modern classic.

Burgos-Debray—a Venezuelan anthropologist who now directs the Institut Français in Seville, a haven for revisionist studies of the Columbus expedition—may be responsible for the strident intrusion of such First World feminist concerns as the repudiation of marriage, a real rarity among Central American women, Indian or not. That *I, Rigoberta Menchú* is a propaganda product created by Burgos-Debray for Menchú to sign is unarguable.

In an interview in Mexico last July, Menchú insisted on placing all blame for the slow progress of government-URNG peace talks on "the government's hard-line stance." She also called for U.N. intervention, supported by diplomatic pressure, to force the elected government to accept the militarist-left URNG as an equal partner in negotiations. This demand conforms exactly to the guerrillas' line: URNG spokesman Hector Nuila says that "as long as it is not acknowledged that there is conflict in Guatemala, it will be impossible to find a negotiated solution to the situation in that country." The same spokesman said his organization would intensify its activities to force the government and the armed forces to negotiate.

Thus, the goal of the campaign by Menchú and her supporters is to legitimize an armed extremist minority acting against a legal, civilian government by transforming that terrorist effort into a "Guatemalan civil war." Menchú's cause is not that of peace and reconciliation, but of murder and subversion, as the Nordic snobs responsible for this ridiculous award know full well. Perhaps promoting violence in a distant country of which they know nothing will console them after the failure of radical ideas in their own part of the world. ❐

Stephen Schwartz is author of A Strange Silence *(ICS Press), an account of the election of Violeta Chamorro in 1990.*

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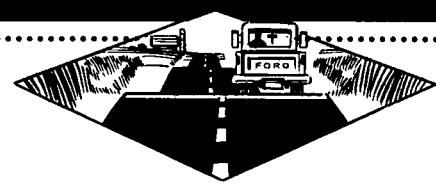

Warren Remembrance

by Roger Fontaine and Peter Hannaford

At 2 o'clock on the afternoon of June 20, 1923, President Warren Gamaliel Harding, his wife, and a traveling party of sixty-three guests, officials, aides, and reporters boarded the train that would take them across the continent on a "Voyage of Understanding." Harding saw the two-month trip as a way to demonstrate his leadership, to give energy to the Republican party, and to mix with ordinary Americans far from his troubles in Washington.

He stood on the rear platform of *The Superb,* his private car, and waved smilingly at the crowd, but his heart must have been heavy. Before leaving the White House, he told his private secretary, Judson Welliver, that he had been betrayed by people he thought were his friends. Despite restlessness within his own party and a group of businessmen promoting Henry Ford for the presidency, Harding told Welliver he would run for a second term in 1924 and would tell the people how his administration had been betrayed. "The people will believe me when they hear that story," he said.

They never heard it from his lips, for forty-three days later Harding died in the Palace Hotel in San Francisco. Hundreds of thousands turned out to pay their respects as the train bearing his body made its way back to Washington, and even more lined the route. Yet today one of those things that everyone knows is that Warren Harding was the worst President in the nation's history.

Roger Fontaine is a Washington-based writer. He was a member of the National Security Council staff during the Reagan Administration. Peter Hannaford is a public affairs consultant, author of Talking Back to the Media, *and co-author of the forthcoming* Remembering Reagan.

Why does "everyone know" this to be true? When his record in office—not quite twenty-eight months' worth—is considered calmly, Harding turns out to have been one of our better Presidents. True, already there were men in the Harding Administration (such as Jesse Smith and Charles Forbes) whose betrayal of trust was weighing heavily on Harding when *The Superb* pulled out of Union Station. As we come to the end of this century, however, it should be obvious that all Presidents have this problem and are equally reluctant to confront it.

A trio of hostile journalists was responsible for the myth of a Harding failure. All of them revered Harding's predecessor, Woodrow Wilson, and resented Harding as a vulgar usurper. They saw Big Business, Wall Street, and the military as the crowning ills of free-rein capitalism, and government—lots of it—as the antidote.

As for Harding, their received wisdom came to this: the twenty-ninth President was a small-town pol content to play poker and swill bourbon while the country skated heedlessly into self-indulgence at home and isolationism in foreign affairs.

Harding's reputation began to erode during the Teapot Dome investigation and trials (1923-30), although there is no evidence that Harding was aware of the infamous loan from oilman Edward Doheny to Harding's Interior Secretary Albert Fall.

Soon after Fall was sentenced in 1929, a book appeared that had the effect of blackening Harding's reputation. *The Strange Death of President Harding* purported to be from the diaries of one Gaston Means, a notorious scoundrel who had briefly worked as an investigator for William J. Burns, head of the Bureau of Investigation (predecessor to the FBI). On leaving the bureau, Means engaged in extortion, fraud, and bootlegging. (This is not to mention the suspicious death of a rich woman he had befriended.) Although he was widely known in Washington as an out-and-out liar, his book hit the best-seller lists with its wild assertions, including the claim that Florence Harding had poisoned her husband.

The picture of a machine-tainted, small-town cards-and-whiskey politico could equally describe Harry S Truman, but Truman had the advantage of living long after leaving office and thus was able to participate in his rehabilitation. But if any President can be said to have grown in office, it was Harding, despite his brief tenure (shorter even than John F. Kennedy's Thousand Days). Harding, alas, had no court historians to gild his presidency.

Now, enter the trio: Frederick Lewis Allen, whose book *Only Yesterday,* first published in 1931, is still in print; Samuel Hopkins Adams, whose initial fame was won by muckraking the patent medicine business (Adams believed in carpet-bombing soft targets); and William Allen White, editor of the Emporia, Kansas *Gazette.* White embodied the liberal notion of what a small-town editor should be like, principally because he embraced the liberal views of the day but put them in the *Gazette* rather than the *New Republic.*

Allen, Adams, and White were not professional historians, but their work went unchallenged until Francis Russell's 1968 biography *The Shadow of Blooming Grove*, by which time the damage had been done. Is it any surprise that there have been few challenges to the legend that years of Republican complacency, insensitivity, and greed (Harding through Hoover) brought on an economic depression that was nearly the ruin of the nation?

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—William Murchison
Syndicated columnist
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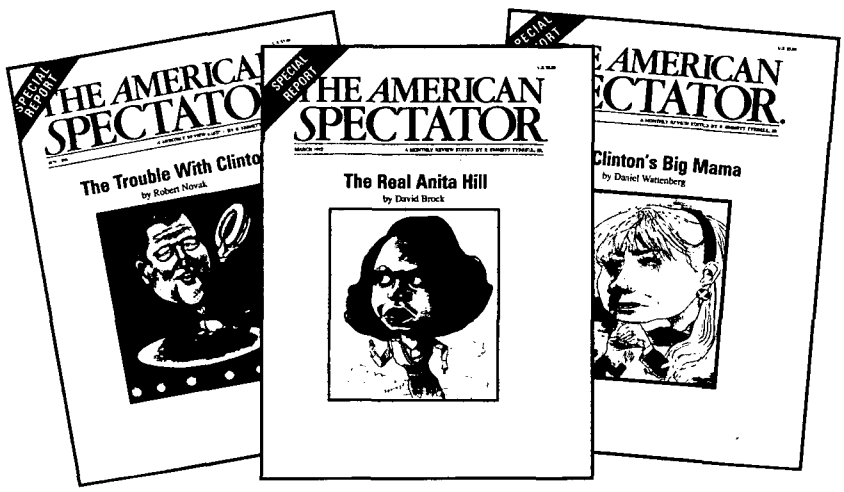

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It is virtually unknown today that Harding had at least a half-dozen accomplishments to his credit, each of which belied the picture of a passive glad-hander. He also recruited a strong cabinet because, like Lincoln, he did not fear being surrounded by able men. Sycophants they were not. Charles Evans Hughes as Secretary of State, Herbert Hoover at Commerce, and Andrew Mellon at Treasury were leaders of substance and achievement, as was Albert Lasker, who cleaned up the previous administration's Shipping Board scandal.

What are Harding's forgotten accomplishments? Consider the following:

• What had been a closed and secretive White House, Harding threw wide open to the press and public. He stopped work every weekday at noon to have an impromptu handshaking reception with ordinary citizens visiting the presidential mansion. In contrast to the last mournful years of the Wilson Administration, which left the fate of the country in the hands of the invalid President's wife, Harding ran a transparent and accessible presidency.

• Harding created the Bureau of the Budget (today the Office of Management and Budget), which established an orderly means of collecting, analyzing, and adjusting spending requests from the various units of government, then presenting them to Capitol Hill in one package. Harding persuaded financial wizard Charles Dawes to head the new bureau. Dawes promptly saved the nation $2 billion by trimming swollen budget requests.

• The Washington Naval Conference of 1922, the first genuinely successful arms reduction conference in history (although several of the parties fudged on its formula later), was initiated by and presided over by Harding. These talks were propelled by Harding's own sense of the tragedy and futility of "The Great War," which he expressed eloquently at the dedication of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

• Harding took a genuine interest in improved race relations and civil rights. He gave a courageous speech in Birmingham, Alabama, before a black and white audience, something no other President had dared do since the Civil War. The President told his audience that American democracy would be a sham until blacks were granted political and economic equality. That came as a shock

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to his white listeners, but it was wildly received by the blacks. In Washington, Harding hired blacks for government duty, replacing Wilson's policy of firing them solely on the basis of race. His progressive detractors were not above bigotry of their own: recurrent rumors that Harding himself was part black followed him all his life. He refused to deny them.

• Harding made a major commitment to increasing mixed use (recreation and development) of federal lands in the West, virtually creating the model that prudent Presidents have followed ever since. The Western itinerary of the "Voyage of Understanding" was crafted to demonstrate this commitment (including a first-ever presidential visit to Alaska).

• With his Secretary of the Treasury Andrew Mellon, Harding sponsored tax-cuts that fueled a national economic recovery and expansion that lasted nearly a decade, a decade known by its detractors as the Roaring Twenties. That prosperity ended with the exorbitant Smoot-Hawley Tariff hike and the grossly deflationary liquidity squeeze dictated by an inept Federal Reserve Board after the 1929 stock market crash.

• Then there are the things Harding didn't do. Unlike Wilson, Harding did not violate the Constitution by touching off a Red Scare. Harding, in fact, was so leery of that kind of government abuse that he pointedly pardoned the Socialist Eugene Debs, whom Wilson had thrown into prison as a dangerous pacifist.

Few of these accomplishments are mentioned by the myth-makers, but Harding was a popular President, virtually assured of re-election had he lived. A journalist himself, he enjoyed a good press. One reason: he never lied to his fellow journalists, unlike his notoriously devious and sanctimonious predecessor.

Despite the erosion that began shortly after his death, Harding's reputation remained more or less intact for almost a decade. That was to change with the Gaston Means book and then Frederick Lewis Allen's *Only Yesterday*. Allen's book was styled "an informal history." That part, at least, was accurate. A sample:

> Harding looked back with longing eyes to the good old days when the government didn't bother businessmen with unnecessary regulations, but provided them with fat tariffs and instructed the Department of Justice not to have them on its mind.

That Harding was a lifelong anti-high-tariff man could not be expected to get in the way of Allen's stereotype.

Harding's achievement at the Naval Conference also escaped notice. Allen was too busy, among other things, flaying Harding's rhetorical style (a favorite target of all the man's detractors). The easy arrows directed at Harding's admittedly overstuffed rhetoric were meant to suggest that he wasn't very bright.

H.L. Mencken, always on the lookout for a straw man, aimed his own undisciplined prose at the President after his 1921 inaugural:

> It reminds me of a string of wet sponges; it reminds me of tattered washing on the line; it reminds me of stale-bean soup, of college yells, of dogs barking idiotically through endless nights. It drags itself out of the dark abysm of pish, and crawls insanely up the topmost pinnacles of posh. It is rumble and bumble. It is flap and doodle. It is balder and dash.

And consider the oft-told tax story in which Harding supposedly delivered this dictum on fiscal policy: "I know somewhere there is a book that will give me the truth, but, hell, I couldn't read the book."

Allen, who was no stranger to that book, also attacked Harding for his sexual liaison with Nan Brinton, calling it a series of "cheap sex episodes" and "clandestine meetings in disreputable hotels." It's hard to say if Allen's opinion of Harding would have improved if the President had taken his mistress to the Waldorf. And, no one ever said Nan fooled around with gangsters.

But Allen dealt Harding only a glancing blow, compared to Samuel Hopkins Adams, whose *The Incredible Era* came out in 1939. With Harding long dead, Adams could use real names, and he was out for blood:

> We the sovereign people had chosen for leader by an unprecedented majority . . . [a] third-rate Babbitt with the equipment of a small-town, semi-educated journalist, the standards of a handshaking joiner and all-around good guy, the instincts and habits of a corner sport, and the traditions of a party hack; an expert on partisan mechanics, a sophomore in legislation, a tyro in economics and government, an ignoram in world movements and trends.

Adams recycles, for example, White's second-hand story with never a doubt about its authenticity. He also cites Bruce Bliven's nonsensical quote ascribed to Harding, namely, that the President wished to raise American tariffs "to protect the struggling industries of Europe." He even uses William Estabrook Chancellor, an academic racist at Wooster College whose particular mania was proving Harding's African ancestry. Adams used the professor's genealogical "research" to affect amusement that Harding had African blood. "Negroes," in Adams's account are invariably "bug-eyed," and the author gratuitously quotes a "darkie" joke approvingly (at Harding's expense). Not surprisingly, Harding's bold speech in Birmingham goes without notice.

Adams borrowed freely from other Harding floggers, such as Senator William McAdoo, who compared the President's rhetoric to "an army of pompous phrases moving over the landscape in search of an idea." Adams neglects to mention that McAdoo was a

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Democrat and son-in-law of Woodrow Wilson. Adams also forgets to mention that McAdoo, a wealthy lawyer, was in the pay of oilman Edward Doheny of Teapot Dome fame. But, instead of a Democratic scandal, Adams turned Teapot Dome into *l'affaire Harding*. Even now Adams's one-sided version of the issue has become the accepted one, although most people have no idea where the Teapot Dome canon originated.

"Teapot Dome" involved leases on oil-rich property owned by the U.S. Navy in Wyoming and California. These "reservoirs" were the strategic reserve of the day, thought to be essential to a navy converting from coal to faster oil-burning warships. Keeping these reserves locked up made little economic sense even in wartime; however, the stockpiling mentality prevailed among the Navy brass.

Private developers, among them Doheny and Harry Sinclair, wanted to pump oil from these and adjacent areas, and sought permission to do so from Secretary of the Interior Albert Fall who, in turn, got an okay from the Secretary of the Navy. Fall's mistake was in accepting personal loans from Doheny and Sinclair, whom he had known for years. These looked like bribes, especially since bidding on the leases was not open (a procedure that was legal under the circumstances). Fall then denied, in a letter to Senate investigators, that he had ever received a cent from either Doheny or Sinclair. Harding was not informed of this arrangement, nor did he benefit from it.

Fall served a year in jail; Sinclair six months (for contempt of court and Congress); Doheny was found not guilty. But for Adams, it was a matter of guilt by association, a pattern that will be familiar to students of Iran-contra.

Adams knew little about oil, naval politics, or strategic misjudgments. Instead, he focused on "corporate greed" that led to the unforgivable sin of people making money developing oil resources on sacred "government" land. What he and other Teapot mavens overlooked was that the issue was, at bottom, a policy dispute, not a scandal. On one side were the "developmentalists" who wanted to exploit the nation's reserves at a time of perceived petroleum scarcity (the U.S. Bureau of Mines projected in 1919 that oil production would decline in two to five years). On the other side were those who wanted as much land as possible locked up and left untouched forever. The policy dispute sailed right over Adams's head, or he chose to ignore it in his one-dimensional portrait of the Teapot Dome affair.

The scandal was no Watergate. It played no part in the 1924 election, which Calvin Coolidge won handily. Yet William Allen White also embraced the late-blooming orthodoxy, with one advantage over the other detractors: he had actually known Harding. White thought Harding was simply not in his class. And he was right. White had more money, which he inherited. So, while this Kansas patrician and his family took regular trips to Europe, the poltroon from Ohio was lucky to make it to Florida for a round of golf. Worse, Harding's favorite breakfast was chipped beef on toast.

By the time he wrote his *Autobiography* in the early forties (it would be completed posthumously, by his son in 1946), the *Gazette* editor had no use for Harding. To White, Harding's era was all "corruption, vulgarity, scandal, ineptitude in English and an addiction to trash."

White was an ardent Bull Mooser, and never forgave Harding's loyalty to Taft in the 1912 election. Even thirty years later, White failed to grasp what the supposedly simple-minded Harding was doing at the time. Harding understood well that the Republican party remained deeply split even after Roosevelt's death and Taft's appointment (by Harding) to the Supreme Court. As leader of his party, Harding saw he would have to carry out a balancing act if the GOP were to survive as an effective counterweight to the Democrats, who in some parts of the country (and not just in the South) were owned lock, stock, and cross by the Ku Klux Klan.

While Harding saw the need to heal the 1912 wounds within the party, drawing from both elements, White never did. For him, Harding was a "poor dub," a mediocrity. The dub nevertheless helped keep the party from self-destruction by naive and unforgiving factionalists such as White. For that his reputation became a punching bag for White, just as it did for the attention-seeking Adams and Allen, the scoundrel Means, and dozens of Democratic party orators and pseudo-intellectuals in the decades since. ❐

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One Man, One Accelerator

Even those most ardent complainers of leaky enforcement have to concede one thing about our speed limits — they *do* slow us down.

Which brings up the question it's about time somebody asked: Does the United States of America really want to be a slow country?

Slow — if that were the shared vision of the citizens — would be a pretty disappointing outcome of this nation's grand experiment in democracy. We fought off the British and stared down the commies so we could do *what*?

It would be pretty out of character too, given the pride we take in America as a land of opportunity. Opportunity to be slow? No, it even sounds wrong.

And according to the democratic process in which we all believe, it *is* wrong. Americans vote daily with their dollars and slow is the loser, in every market from high-tech computers to low-tech fast food. The sky wouldn't be thick with jetliners if Americans wanted slow. And patrolmen wouldn't be handing out 25 million speeding tickets a year.

On the Interstates, the ordinary motorist's vote with his foot is a clearer democratic statement than any national election. A landslide two-to-one majority, according to NHTSA statistics, vote for a speed above 65 mph. And these votes are cast at great personal risk to driving records and insurance premiums. Americans definitely don't want slow.

A government that's truly of the people, by the people, and for the people would read the message on the radar gun and get cracking on the citizens' mandate for a faster pace. But the government we have takes the view that we citizens are suicidal maniacs. That we operate with wanton disregard for our fellows. That we don't know our own best interests and will kill ourselves if left to our own counsel.

This is plain old elitist thinking of the sort that democracy was meant to stop. By definition, a majority of *the people* determines the will of the nation. And back when speed limits were left to traffic engineers instead of politicians, they were set at the 85th percentile of free-flowing traffic speed in deference to the majority's assessment of self interest.

The majority turns out to be right about safe speeds, a fact confirmed by a very expensive engineering survey recently paid for with our tax dollars by our Department of Transportation. *Driver Speed Behavior on U.S. Streets and Highways*, by Samuel C. Tignor, Ph.D., and Davey Warren, both of the Federal Highway Administration, found that: "The accident involvement rates on streets and highways in urban areas were *highest* for the *slowest* five percent of traffic, lowest for traffic in the 30-to-95-percentile range, and increased for the fastest five percent of traffic (emphasis added)."

The authors go on to say: "Many current speed limits coincide with 30-percentile speed which is near the lower bound of safe travel speed. Speed limits should be set in the 70-to-90-percentile range or roughly 5 to 10 mph above the average speed to correctly reflect maximum safe speed. Speed limits are set in multiples of 5 mph; the 70-to-90-percentile range will almost always include a 5 mph multiple. Allowing a 5-mph tolerance, enforcement would then be targeted at the drivers who are clearly at risk."

We, the people, are voting with our feet, and we have progress on our minds.

Why don't we listen to the engineers instead of the public-policy elitists? Why don't we demand a new government attitude about speed, an attitude in sync with the will of the people? Instead of being scolded all the time — "Speed Kills!" — let's hear "Speed gets us there sooner, fresher, happier." Our government's job is to put the incentive in favor of speed instead of against it, then get out of the way and let Yankee ingenuity do its best. Let's open highway traffic up to the free market.

At first, speeds wouldn't change much. Tignor and Warren report: "Raising the speed limit by various amounts up to 15 mph has little or no effect on speeds over broad range of road types and speed levels." Speeds wouldn't change immediately because motorists' self interest wouldn't change — to reach the destination quickly, safely, economically, and comfortably.

The "quickly" part would definitely happen over time though, if the new government attitude lets the market work. The government has only to promise regular traffic surveys and regular updating of speed limits to the new 85th-percentile. The people have proven they want speed and they'll vote with their dollars for new cars and trucks that deliver it safely, economically and comfortably. Auto makers will immediately begin competing among themselves to satisfy this perfectly predictable demand.

This new attitude toward speed would rebuild America faster and more thoroughly than any Congressional infrastructure program — at no cost to taxpayers. Crime would drop as the police chased criminals instead of speeders. There'd be jobs, jobs, jobs, as the domestic automakers, catering to the demand for safe, efficient speed, took over from the importers whose world-market cars were no longer good enough for us. Cold-war defense scientists, now unappreciated, would become vital again, pulled into private industry to invent speed for everyone instead of just a few fighter jocks. We'd all get to our destinations sooner too, which any economist would recognize as a productivity improvement.

There is a larger goal too. As we observe the close of the American Century, we must understand that we'll never make it two in a row if we don't get off the brakes. We are the first generation of Americans to drive slower than our fathers. We have begun our decline.

Sixty-five mph has never been the limit of American ambition. But it will be the limit of our achievement if we keep this go-slow attitude. ■

— Mike Valentine, President
Valentine Research, Inc.
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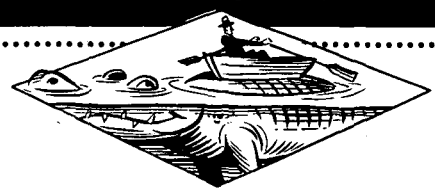


Lebanon: A Traveler's Confession

by Edward Norden

Dual citizenship was not without advantages. For example, first as a journalist on his own with an American passport, then as an Israeli in army uniform escorting foreign journalists to the front, then as a Jerusalem-based journalist again, the ex-American was able to spend much of the second half of 1982 and not a little of the next two years making raids across the border into Lebanon.

There he was taught a few things at first hand which before he'd only heard spoken of, or read about.

He learned, somewhat late in life, that some people have trouble, while some are only under the impression. He learned that if, thanks to his dual citizenship, he could wear two hats, this wasn't the ultimate in options, because the professional war reporters and war photographers packed even more—they were voyeurs and journeymen, emissaries and crazy persons, careerists and saints, knaves, moralists, and daredevils in safari jackets. He himself was no daredevil. Traveling for days and nights at a time and going where he pleased in the Land of the Cedars, he learned that it's possible to fear every harmless window, every innocent wall, every driver of a beat-up Mercedes weaving in your direction. Compared with what could happen in Lebanon, the stone-bullet-and-tear gas routines at the Birzeit campus, over the Green Line half an hour north of Jerusalem in what the trade knew as the occupied West Bank, were farcical.

He was taught in the steaming port cities and cool, dry, picture-postcard villages glued to the Lebanese mountainside that there were limits to what the Israel Defense Forces were capable of. The same went for the Shabak (more or less Israel's FBI) and the Mossad (its CIA), both of which were very much on the scene as well.

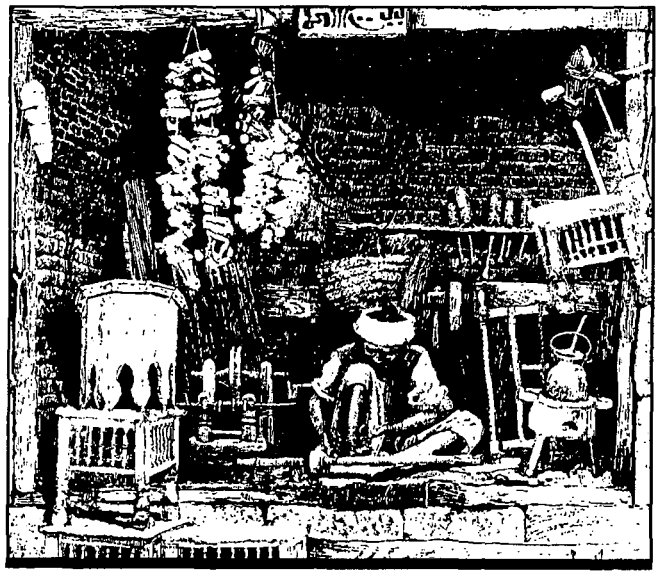
He learned in Lebanon too of the casual heroism and viciousness of ordinary Arabs, ordinary humans, ordinary civilians in a country where the front was everywhere and the nearest thing to consolation was revenge. He learned that all the tribes had justice on their side. Furthermore, all went in for atrocities, and all, including the Maronites who suffered from a bad press and the Palestinians who were in Lebanon in the first place only because they had lost to the Jews in the Galilee all the way back in 1948, fought like tigers when their turf was in question. Everyone was brave, and strangely enough everyone was likable. The ex-American was surprised to learn that likable people could behave atrociously—likable human beings could treat human beings of other tribes and even of their own tribe worse than dogs and either think nothing of it or love it.

No saint himself, he learned that a taste of chaos can be sweet. Queasy as he often was in Lebanon, he'd find himself almost missing the lawlessness when back in quiet, boring Jerusalem.

And in Lebanon he learned more about what some called Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza District. He had stopped covering these parts of the Land of Israel four years before, and liked to believe that after eighteen intensive months over the Green Line, he knew everything there was to know about them. He was, it now emerged, very wrong.

No one, he now learned, should say that he knew Ramallah, Bethel, Hebron, Ophra, Nablus-Shechem, Gaza, and supposedly united Jerusalem until he had been in the ruins of Arafat's Kingdom and walked alone at dusk, heart thumping, across that other Green Line, the one which separated Beirut's Christian and Moslem halves and was nothing but sandbags, teen-aged gunmen, rats, garbage, and block after block of buildings shot to Swiss cheese. Yes, Lebanon and Beirut were the West Bank and Jerusalem come into their own.

His eighteen months as a reporter in Ramallah, Bethel, Hebron, etc., the maudlin songs on his car radio of the Palestinian refugee Fayruz who resided in Beirut and all his reading about the Geopolitical Context, the Arab World, and the Palestinian Diaspora, had prepared him almost not at all for what he saw, smelled, heard, and felt when he got to Beirut. There was nothing like being there, they said, and in this case the cliché was on target.



Edward Norden is a regular contributor to The American Spectator.

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He had written distantly of Lebanon years before in an essay on Ramallah. He had reported the thoughts and words of a young Palestinian woman from a good Ramallah family who was rubbed the wrong way by Israeli occupation, who wore a crucifix dangling into her cashmere sweater, and who had been attending the American University of Beirut when the troubles started in 1975. "It's crazy up there!" he had quoted her. Not until he got to Lebanon, though, did he really understand what she had been talking about.

First he had to see for himself the adult children and the juvenile adults, the rats scuttling on the Green Line, the gunmen, the thriving restaurants, the Arab civilians of all the various tribes who writhed under, put up with, and positively relished the gore. Many found the gore funny—they couldn't get their fill. He had to see the bodies of hundreds of Palestinians, massacred by other Arabs, laid in a mass grave and covered with lime in the Shatilla refugee camp. The Arabs who'd done this massacring were temporarily allied with his people. He had to learn that a sensitive Jew like himself could see such a sight with his own eyes and then go to a restaurant and eat heartily. He had to sit in a Beirut restaurant spooning creamy *labane* into himself and have a rat the size of a puppy scamper across the bar. The English barmaid jumped, and an Armenian Beiruti sipping a drink remarked that the only thing the Arabs didn't understand was force.

He visited the campus of AUB. Piles of garbage smoldered here and there. Posters of Khomeini and the Dome of the Rock were plastered on the walls—Liberate Jerusalem, ordered the Ayatollah. The ex-American, doing his job, interviewed Arab doctors at the AUB hospital, both Moslem and Christian, who had become proficient at treating gunshot wounds and trauma. These wounds over seven years' time had been inflicted on Arabs mostly by other Arabs. Some of the latest had been inflicted by his own people, by the Israelis, by the Jews. He saw and listened to his countrymen, his fellow soldiers, far from home. He was disguised as an American who didn't know Hebrew, and he eavesdropped on their bafflement at how things had turned out. He heaved a sigh every time he crossed the border back into the law and order and safety of Israel. To arrive in the Jewish state from Lebanon was like arriving in Switzerland from the Jewish state.

And in Lebanon too, rather late in life, he was tempted by a notion which he had only come across before in books—that when all was said and done the only difference between various peoples, tribes, outfits, and nations was the magnitude of their crimes. This was the old idea he was tempted by when he witnessed the Israeli army's siege of West Beirut.

He watched a crew of skullcapped tankers shelling houses a mile away. Who knew who was inside being blown to pieces? The Mossad? The Shabak? "Wow, that's pretty!" exclaimed the Israeli boy in the turret after a shell impacted. The ex-American, not a professional war reporter, was frightened by a PLO counter-attack with Katyushas. He saw the IDF ambulances racing to collect the casualties. He saw the IDF engineers shutting off the water to half a million people.

Later, after Arafat sailed away and the siege was history, and after the Syrians liquidated Bashir Jemayel, he crossed into West Beirut for the first time and toured the wreckage of Arafat's Kingdom. He read the catchwords daubed on walls in Sabra and Shatilla. "Long Live the Liberation of Palestine," someone had scrawled. "With Fire and Blood Until the Victory of the Revolution," another fool had written in snaky Arabic on the wall of a hovel hit by an Israeli shell. He watched the bloated corpses of Palestinians massacred by Phalangists being laid in a mass grave and sprinkled with lime, he watched the news photographers clicking away for the Pulitzer Prize, he stuffed himself in a restaurant on the seafront, and back in his hotel room he dipped into the book he had taken along, Edmund Wilson's *Europe Without Baedeker*.

"The Allies," Wilson reported for the *New Yorker* from Italy in 1945, "bombarded Milan as cruelly and as indiscriminately as the Germans ever did London. Most of this hideous damage was inflicted in August, 1943, when we were trying to force Badoglio's hand by a series of pure terror bombings aimed at densely populated districts."

Wilson arrived in Milan two years

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after the event, so his readers had to accept as the truth what the man of letters was told by the townspeople. The ex-American in a Beirut hotel had no trouble accepting it. He could also believe it when Wilson added: "Since the departure of the Germans, the Partisans in the North have been guilty of some ruthless and probably unjustifiable bloodshed: they are supposed to have killed some twenty thousand people."

The ex-American's unspoken faith had been that the Jews were different. Without toughness, of course, empathy could be suicidal, whoever you were—in principle, he had known that for a long time. Yet he had also believed that basically the Jews were the ones who chiseled and the *goyim* the ones who killed. He had held on to this little article of faith after moving to the Jewish state. Yes, he had read the books on the war in 1948—the most trustworthy, least propagandistic of them confirmed some of the stories he was told by older Palestinians in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza of how his adopted countrymen, in the midst of and following a desperate war, had encouraged them to leave and bulldozed their villages. He had spent eighteen months getting to know the occupation. He had heard stories of torture. Some, not many, of these were true too. He had made a journey of exploration and discovery in the Land of Israel, and come out fatalistic, but still believing that the Jews, thanks to their nature or intelligence, played the tough, inescapable game of power and war somewhat differently, somewhat less like criminals, and, interestingly and encouragingly enough, somewhat more successfully. He liked to believe that the difference between Jews and *goyim* in this respect was so great that it was effectively a difference of kind, not degree.

The war in Lebanon and the siege of Beirut finally opened his eyes. Here it turned out that to banish Arafat and his men, and redraw the geopolitical picture, the ex-American's people were ready to starve and bomb a city most of the people of which had nothing to do with the PLO. The Lebanese had suffered at the hands of the PLO and were now suffering at Jewish, at Israeli hands. He experienced some guilt as a Jew and as a relatively new Israeli.

He experienced it, while at the same time resenting what some of the foreign newspersons whom he was escorting and who were buying him lunches were doing. They and/or their editors in London, Paris, and New York were taking this chance to bash his adopted country in print and on the tube, saying things they had waited years to say, making the invasion out to be as bloody as anything in history. Well, the war was bloody, it was bad news, it also did not seem to be a particularly intelligent operation on the Israeli side, yet what these reporters were up to galled him.

His anger, split in two, canceled itself out, leaving him confused. He was angry with the journalists, these faithful agents of the right to know and see, who were only interested in the Palestinian women, children, and old people the IDF had injured, ignoring the Lebanese—both Moslem and Christian—who had welcomed the Jews as their rescuers. But soon enough, he became angry with Ariel Sharon and Menachem Begin too for sending the IDF into this madhouse. For something had gone wrong. He had been dazzled, at first, by the size of the operation. The IDF going in looked all-powerful. But when Operation Peace for Galilee turned into a siege of a metropolis, he had second thoughts. The IDF wasn't made for sieges. This couldn't have been planned or foreseen. Something had gone wrong.

Lebanon was a higher education for the ex-American, for not a few other Israelis, and for the occupied Palestinians in Ramallah and Gaza, especially the teenagers. The last drew conclusions from the IDF's publicized troubles, and these were to give birth to the *intifada*. There was always more to learn, however.

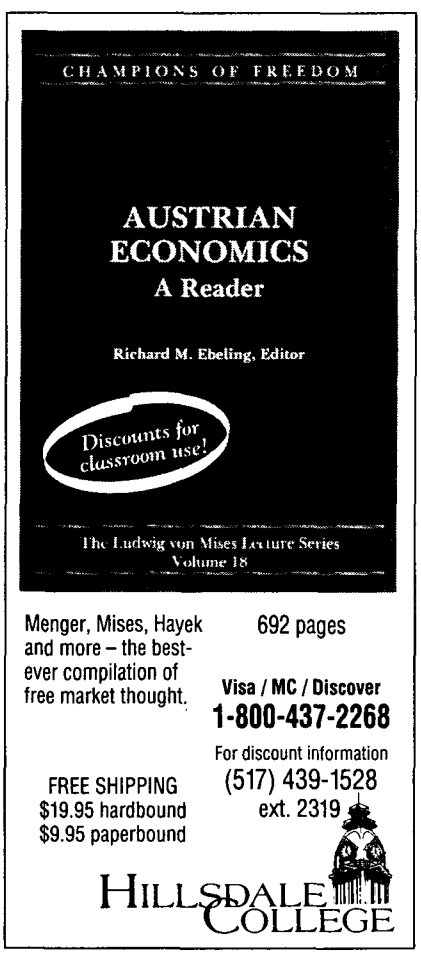
Having come so far, and Sharon having been obliged to quit after the findings of the commission of inquiry into the massacres had been published, the Jews couldn't and didn't just run home. If they did that, the limits of their power and intelligence would be shown up too glaringly, and there would be all kinds of geopolitical hell to pay. So the ex-American watched as the IDF, aided by the Shabak and Mossad, slowly pulled back by stages, shooting at unexplained roadside objects, and grimly improvised a security zone along Israel's northern border, inside Lebanese territory, which was to prove more successful than not.

Also, returning to Beirut after Arafat had sailed away, he learned that the siege, as sieges go, had been mild, far from total. He wouldn't have liked to be on the other side. But compared with other sieges described by historians and eyewitnesses from Troy to Leningrad, this one seemed to have been not so horrible.

Lebanese in West Beirut told him that the water had never been shut off for more than a day at a time. They informed him that food was always being smuggled through in quantities and except for two days—August 5 and 12, 1982, when the IDF seemed to go crazy—the bombing and shelling was pinpointed on the refugee camps and Palestinian neighborhoods, which as far as most Lebanese were concerned was all right.

It was a close thing, but finally he rejected the idea that everything and everyone was the same.

He thought, too, about civility. When it came to civility, the *goyim* in their pressed uniforms put the shouting, nosy, sloppy, chiseling Jews to shame. It had supposedly always been so, and it was definitely so in the last quarter of the twentieth century, even now when the Jews had their own country again. Yet didn't good manners mask a craving for



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violence that raged in more *goyim* than would readily confess to it? They felt it and were terrified of the happiness they would get from satisfying it—yes, the ex-American thought he sensed this strain among many Lebanese civilians and gunmen, and also among the mild-mannered, likable U.S. Marines and sailors and French paratroops who spent a season in Beirut keeping the so-called peace.

The Americans were especially likable.

He and his traveling companion, a German journalist, drive into the U.S. Marine Corps installation at Beirut airport one sunny day in 1983 looking for a story. Anyone may drive right in—it's early days yet. The Americans, these other countrymen of his, have arrived to keep the peace. They're to be seen catching beneficial rays and cutting the grass and pumping iron, each leatherneck with his Walkman and not a weapon in sight. The two reporters introduce themselves to the press officer, a major with a tent of his own, and he asks, "Are you here for the cheerleaders?"

Never betray puzzlement! Without missing a beat, the German answers that they are indeed.

"There's a bird leaving now," the major tells them. "Run get on it."

Run they do. A crewman gives each a pair of earmuffs for the noise, and before you can say foreign correspondent they've been hoisted a thousand feet over the Shi'ite slums, the Palestinian refugee camps, the Commodore hotel, and the campus of the university, and are zooming over the Mediterranean, where ships of the Sixth Fleet, including the USS *New Jersey* with her fearsome guns, are strung out like the models the ex-American put together in boyhood. The German grins at him and shrugs his shoulders. They touch down on the deck of the helicopter landing ship USS *Raleigh*.

The ship is sitting low in the water, because on her must be gathered half the sailors of the fleet and most of the Marines from on shore—four thousand or so young Americans packed together like expectant sardines. They're clinging to the *Raleigh*'s spars, hanging from the bridge, shinnying half-way to the top of the superstructure where the radar dishes rotate under the Stars and Stripes.

A lieutenant takes him and the German in hand. He brings them to the wardroom, where the Dallas Cowgirls are mixing with officers and getting their USS *Raleigh* caps. Most of the ships of the fleet, the lieutenant says, sailed from Norfolk more than four months ago. There'll be no shore leave for another month—shore leave, by the way, is going to be in Haifa, not Beirut. It seemed like a good idea to have some entertainment before then for the men.

The ex-American asks a sailor back on deck why he's been sent to the Middle East.

"We're here to keep the sides apart while they reason with each other. Maybe we'll have to kick some ass."

The boy is from Nebraska.

"This show is just going to be a big prick tease for a lot of the guys," he forecasts.

And indeed, the redhead, the brunette, the soul sister, and the five blondes when they appear on deck have on almost nothing at all and are more perfect than anything Hugh Hefner dreamed of as an Indiana high schooler. Yet the show isn't hot. The young ladies do what they do, they give it everything they've got for ninety minutes, but it's not hot, not dirty, not apocalyptic. It's just good clean fun far from home.

"You men," says the black girl into the microphone, "are good-looking, you're built, and we love what you're doing for America!" The *Raleigh* shivers with cheers. The Cowgirls perform a hoe-down, slapping rock-hard, silky thighs. They do a cancan. They sing a Pointer Sisters song—"I want to wrap myself around you." They turn cartwheels under the blades of a chopper. They do an encore, then another. The show, viewed and enjoyed by some of the 241 Marines who would be crushed to death in their sleep one quiet Sunday morning not long afterwards, couldn't have been a bigger success.

"All right!"

Outrageously, the ex-American returned to dry land charmed and with his conscience soothed. For what could he demand, in all fairness? That his ex-countrymen, so far from home, think and behave and express themselves less innocently? It would have been very different if they had been in a situation comparable to that of their friends the Israelis, if, to let the imagination soar, there was a Mexico Liberation Organization, armed by the Kremlin, operating across the Rio Grande and confining the people of El Paso and San Diego to underground shelters. Or if, having been bloodied, the Americans with their memories of Danang had committed themselves to a real war, no matter how far from home.

The ex-American, like other Israelis, was saddened when those Marines were killed in their sleep a few months later. He wasn't surprised that, in response, the *New Jersey* opened up with her VW-sized shells on villages overlooking the airport. Nor was he surprised when President Reagan cut his country's losses and pulled all the Marines out, followed by all the U.S. diplomats in wretched Lebanon. It was simply not that important for America to have its way there. Yes, among some people, *goyim* as well as Jews, the craving for violence was generally held in check by prudent self-interest and a decent respect for the opinions of mankind. There was no end to the lessons taught across the border. ❐

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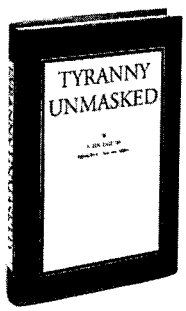

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Tears and Cheers

by Benjamin J. Stein

Wednesday

Here I am again in Heber Springs, Arkansas, visiting my hero father-in-law. It's a warm, dry day, and time for little me to visit the local school. I'm interested in education, plus I'm interested in faces. For years now, I've been working on a general theory of faces, which basically holds that the farther inland from New York or Los Angeles one travels, the sweeter and more intelligent the faces. Arkansas has about the best-looking faces I've ever seen, and I say this even though it also has been known to produce some very cagey, slick faces.

At the sprawling campus of the Heber Springs combined elementary school, junior high school, and high school, my father-in-law Col. Denman and I strolled into the elementary school. We registered our humble selves with the powers-that-be in the principal's office, and then were shown around the pleasant school.

Computers, computers everywhere. A forest of computers. Kids sitting at computers learning reading, spelling, math, vocabulary, geography, history. Computers in neat rows, computers donated by the local grocery store, computers via the taxpayers of Arkansas and Cleburne County. In the background, teachers hover and help, often talking to little knots of children who do not happen to be at computers.

Elementary school as I knew it years ago—long before there were any computers besides the refrigerator-like things at the Strategic Air Command—has apparently vanished from Heber Springs. There are no Miss Carters standing in front of the room saying "Two times two is four. Four times four is sixteen. . . ." I guess that's all done by software designed somewhere far away.

The kids had extremely sweet faces, and the teachers looked like my dream of what teachers should be: focused, kindly, patient, and eager to teach. But I wonder what the effect on kids is of interacting, if that's the right word, with a TV screen instead of with a flesh-and-blood adult. A computer is unforgiving and mechanical. You can "talk" to it while you pick your nose. You need learn no skills of social accommodation when you learn from a computer. You do not learn how to get along with your fellow humans. You do not learn how to think and memorize and reason while you learn to follow some general rules of human conduct.

I loved the school at Heber, and I loved the faces, but I kept thinking that having an adult teach you what is correct and incorrect is better than having a machine do it. I would rather have children grow up thinking that their elders were the source of wisdom than thinking that a machine they can turn on and off is their only master.

Then again, what do I know? I can't even turn on a computer.

Monday

Election eve in Houston. I'm here at the behest of Comedy Central to broadcast to the nation from the Bush-Quayle Victory Party at the Galleria Westin in Houston. I used to wonder where all of the Iranians who aren't in either Iran or Los Angeles have been hanging out, and now I know. They're driving taxis in Houston, working as desk clerks at Houston hotels, waiting tables at Bennigan's at the Galleria. I like Iranians. They're smart. Not sweet, but smart.

Off to the Bush Victory Rally at the Astrodome. It's the last night of the campaign, and even though Bush is far behind in the polls, there's a mob scene here. There are lines of cars stretching for miles to get in and cheer for Bush. We barely got in, and when we did, we had to edge forward slowly to get a glimpse of the entertainment before Bush's speech.

There was Bob Hope, God love him, still in there pitching; Charlton Heston, God really love him, tireless for the cause; Ted Williams, great baseball player and fisherman; Arnold Palmer; some wonderful country singers; and a fabulously good choir from the First Baptist Church.

These people are enthusiastic. Not just enthusiastic, enthralled, wildly devoted to Bush. They look as if awaiting the One True Messiah. I've never seen such enthusiastic human beings at a political gathering. They would crawl on ground glass for Bush. Women are leaning forward with misty, damp looks in their eyes. Men are flushed and breathing heavily. As I made a mental note of this religious revival, a young Bush storm trooper approached me and my producer for Comedy Central and shouted at us, "Press, back to your area!"

I tried to tell him that I couldn't really get a feel for the crowd's enthusiasm from the press pen, but he wouldn't listen. He said he would call the police if the press did not return to its area. He looked as if he was just itching to call the police. His face was mottled and wet with perspiration.

I meekly went back to my press area, but the thought occurred to me that this hostility to the press and by the press had to be a two-way street. How smart Reagan was to have been endlessly friendly and one-of-the-boys to the press. How idiotic to treat the press with mean-

Benjamin J. Stein, author most recently of A License to Steal: The Untold Story of Michael Milken and the Conspiracy to Bilk the Nation *(Simon & Schuster), is a writer, lawyer, economist, and actor living in Malibu, California.*

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ingless hostility. As if showing hostility would somehow shame reporters and pundits into being nice.

Bush finally appeared and gave his usual rambling, shambling talk. What a mess. Even he could not really come up with any good reasons why we should re-elect him. Still, the notion bore down on me that there's a lot of enthusiasm for that old-time religion out there in America. Reagan knew he could tap into it by appealing to the dream of what America is spoze to be. Bush hasn't much of a clue. Reagan's speeches used to bring tears to my eyes. Bush's speeches embarrass me.

As I looked at Bush fumbling as the multitudes hoped for more, I kept thinking of an heir tossing away his principal, a spendthrift who had no idea of the legacy he'd been left. Oh, well. Easy come, easy go.

Tuesday

Election day here in Houston and everywhere else. The first thing I noticed about the Bush-Quayle Victory Party is that the name has subtly been changed, more or less overnight, to the Bush-Quayle Election Party.

The second odd thing is that the party is in a smaller room than the room where dentists' daughters have their wedding receptions. Not only is it small, but it's extremely unfestive. Plus just about the only substantial presence is us media folk. My stand-up slot is right next to Susan Spencer from CBS and near that of Brit Hume from ABC. Of course, their stand-up slots are a lot bigger, but at any rate I'm in damned good company.

The third thing of note is that the Bush guests at this thing are really stoked at the media. The young Texas bucks in their ill-fitting suits and their girlfriends are eying us as if they'd like to kill us. Luckily for me, as soon as they notice I'm from *Ferris Bueller*, they all love me. But the hostility toward the press is fantastic. Several times during the evening, as I went off to buy drink tickets from a beautiful young blond woman named Kelly, the Bush goons shouted at me, "Media back to your slots!"

What's the point?

On one of my forays to get a drink I met Bob Mosbacher and on another I met his son. They were being brave and level-headed. On another trip I met two beautiful girls from the University of Texas named Michaelynn and Christie. They were lovely young rich women who seemed genuinely heartsick that Bush was going to lose.

It was clear from the get-go that if Bush lost Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Colorado by big margins—as he did—it was good-bye White House. I felt sad, but then I flirted with the girl selling the drink tickets, brought her on TV to flirt with her on TV, and then I felt still better. Being on TV is a drug. It's not "like" a drug. It is a drug.

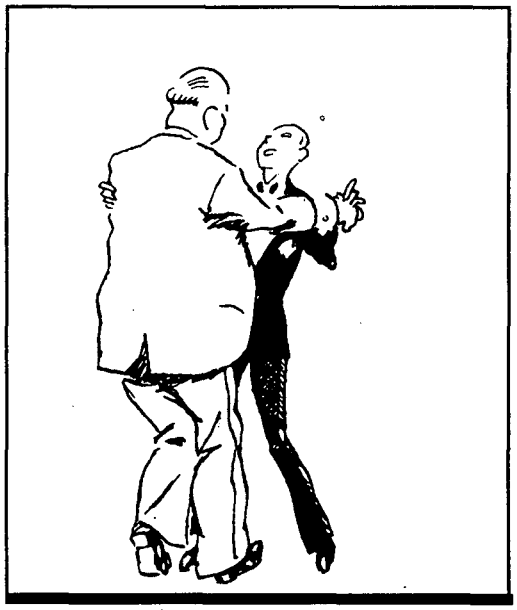
"Kelly," I asked on camera, after Bush was clearly gone, "do you ever like to go out with older men?"

"Yes," she said.

"How about older, intellectual type men?"

"Ooooh, I really like smart men," she said.

"How about men who have houses in Malibu, paid for or not, with great connections in Hollywood?"



"They're the best of all," she said.

I had to do something to amuse myself. The party was not happening. A very wealthy Houstonian whom I knew slightly talked to me under the watchful eye of a Bush Kommando.

"The truth is," she said, "that Barbara Bush hated being First Lady and didn't want George to even run again. She's glad he didn't win from what I hear."

"Really."

"Plus, George wasn't really that keen on winning himself," the woman added. "He really was ready to retire and get out of public service."

At about 9:30 local time, Bush appeared on stage. He gave a short, rambling but polite concession speech, and the crowd of his pals shouted, "WE HATE THE PRESS," over and over again.

It was a scary sight. I can't think of a time when a presidential candidate's party shouted a slogan of hating anyone.

I felt really sad for the party. This is what the whole hope of a Republican party that stood for the ordinary man's dreams of what America should be has come to: blame it on the media. As if the media tossed away Nixon's innovation and brilliance in foreign affairs, his compassion for the poor, as if the media trashed Ronald Reagan's flawed but still historic vision of an America of opportunity for everyone, not just for Wall Street. As if the media didn't even bother to make presidential speeches to the nation for four years.

Blame it on the media. The last refuge of losers.

Oh, well. Time to rethink our lives. My self-help group, Journey into Self-Obsession, has a few applicable slogans:

•When someone criticizes you, maybe he's right.

•When you have a disagreement with someone, maybe he's right.

•When someone tells you that you made a mistake, maybe you did.

•Accept what's inevitable, and work with it.

Good lessons.

Thursday

A meeting in New York with a magazine editor. He's a fabulous guy, the true salt of the earth, a literary, sensitive, wonderful man. We ate at an Italian restaurant on the West Side. "Do you know what kind of college graduates we get?" he asked me. "Let me tell you. We had one from Brown, who didn't know what a dateline was. What future does this country have when journalism interns don't know what a dateline is?"

I took a bus across town to talk to another magazine guy, a wealthy man who owns a small, hip newspaper. We talked about stories, and then he said, "Can we get you to write a column for us really cheap?" →

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"No," I said. "You can't."

"Why not?"

"Because I have to support my family," I said.

"Well, T. writes for us really cheap," he said.

"T. is already rich. I'm not."

"T. has no money at all," the publisher said. "He's broke. At most he's got a few million."

"I see."

"Now will you do it really cheap?"

"No."

I took a bus downtown to buy shoes. It was a cheery Fifth Avenue bus, and the New Yorkers on it looked surprisingly cozy and relaxed. Then, at about 60th Street, a young African-American got on with dark glasses. He sang in a loud voice. He started playing drums on a seat next to an elderly woman. He started talking dirty to himself. Suddenly the whole bus looked sad and frightened. The spell had been broken. The masks came down and the weary, resigned looks appeared. American urban life in a nutshell.

After-dinner drinks with my pal D., a wealthy writer. We ate at a place called the Saloon. "I'm up to a million two-fifty per book," he said. "That's for now. Pretty soon, I'll be at two million, and then who knows? And the books take a few months to grind out."

"I see," I said. The sums he was mentioning so dwarfed my own royalties that it was like comparing a beetle to an elephant.

"I'm thinking of buying a yacht. My kids would love it."

"Makes sense to me."

"I want a real yacht, though. Not a little cabin cruiser. I want something with at least ninety feet of length. Something that I can take friends on and not be ashamed. Maybe have a crew of five or six young women."

"It sounds like a shrewd move in these times."

"I want a yacht my kids won't be ashamed of, Benito," he said. "Something substantial, yet fun."

"Ninety feet sounds exactly right."

Sunday

Here I am in Washington, D.C. At this moment, so to speak, I'm lying on an ancient couch in my parent's amazing Watergate apartment. It's so filled with books, newspapers, and assorted papers that it should really be an exhibit at the Smithsonian. Something like "Apartment of Old Washington Hands, 1937-1999." It's a small apartment, but seems to have every book ever written.

Anyway, I'm lying here and nodding off, my father is sitting a few feet away looking at the silent TV, and my mother is looking through one of her many piles of newspapers. A thought keeps going through my mind. It's a complex thought, but sort of important, so let me explain:

Someday, none of this is going to be here. None of us. This cozy scene. This warm intellectuals' apartment of University of Chicago grads who have seen Presidents come and go. This mother who at her age lugs huge cartons of fresh orange juice for blocks for me, her 47-year-old boychik. This father who

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ignores his angina to work out complex calculations and look up obscure quotes for me. The son who cries far more than a middle-aged man should cry and laughs inappropriately. This moment.

Almost twenty years ago, Bob Tyrrell called me out of the blue to ask me to be a movie critic for his magazine. He said he wanted me to share my "wisdom" with readers. I still remember the phrase, because when he and I talked I lived in a miserably small hovel in Washington, was unhappy and frustrated much of the time, was so filled with self-hate that I used to hit my dog when she misbehaved, and maybe didn't even know how to spell "wisdom."

Time has passed. I worked for Nixon and loved him and still do. I cried every day for six months after he resigned. I fell in love many times and wound up taking girls to emergency rooms for drug overdoses and feeling I was the scum of the earth. I felt fear about money every day for more than a decade. My whole life was based on fear and trying to fight it by eating too much, showing off, and acting as if I knew what wisdom was.

In the past few years, I have come to a better understanding of things. Here's what it is. Life does not change. It's always going to have fear and envy and ambition and low self-esteem lurking out there behind every bush. All of those things are going to conspire to make me feel bad.

But there is also an arsenal of thoughts that make me feel good and keep me able to act decently toward men, women, children, and above all dogs. The arsenal consists of feeling gratitude instead of envy, of surrendering to what's inevitable instead of fighting it, of trusting in God instead of money or movie stars or cars, of realizing my own insignificance except in a comic sense. It also consists of treasuring those whom I love and who love me, and of worshipping the moments of serene companionship with those I love, those perfect gifts from God.

In the years since I've been scribbling for *The American Spectator*, I have come to believe that the magazine and its readers are my family. (Not "like" family, but *family*.) The people who run the *Spectator*—Bob Tyrrell, Wlady Pleszczynski, Chris Caldwell, Ron Burr, and before them, long ago, Adam Meyerson—have never flagged in their solidarity with me. The readers of the *Spectator* have become like a large *meshpuchah*, like kinfolk, all over America, sharing their lives with me as I share mine with them. The hours I spend telling about my life are hours spent among friends, an amber preserve of shared feelings and affection.

I would have to be as good a writer as Bob and Wlady and my hero-writers Aram Bakshian and John Coyne to really say how moved I am to have had this family. I can't really show my thanks except maybe by taking all of you to Morton's and by saying what I've just said: when you're in a room with your elderly parents and it's all quiet, and the sun is setting over the Potomac, and you know you're safe for an hour or two, you're in a good place. Life with those you love, even life in a community formed by reading, is a gift, no matter what else happens. People are saved by knowing what good is, and happiness is falling in love with what you already have.

Happy birthday, Bob and Wlady and Ron and Chris and everyone else, and thanks for my family. ❐

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Crossing the Line

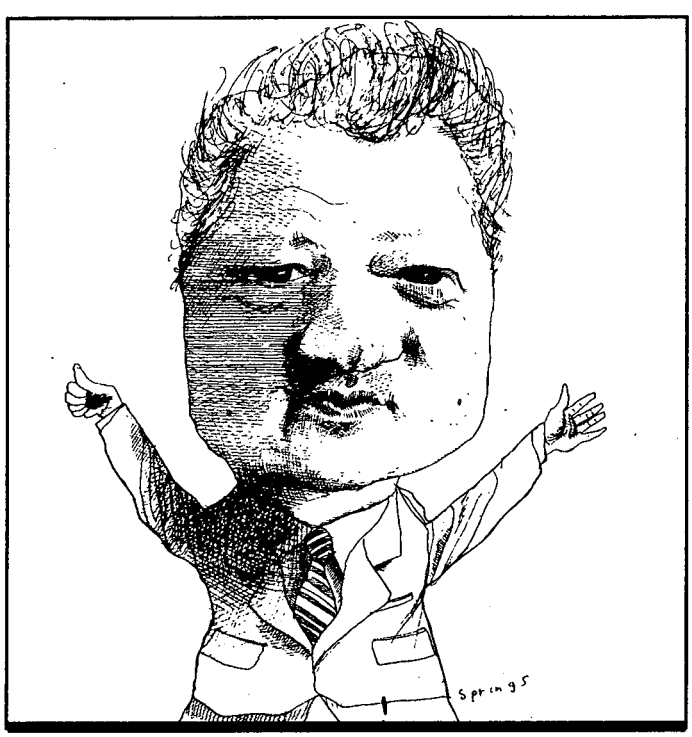
by Terry Eastland

Confronted with information showing that the three major networks gave George Bush a tougher time than Bill Clinton, NBC's political director, Bill Wheatley, told the *Washington Post* that there hadn't been any "active bias at work." At least he agrees there *was* bias, and in that respect, he was more right than he knew. Certain ideas did influence the press, but in some cases reporters probably were not aware of them. For this reason, part of the bias really might have been unpremeditated.

Fundamentally, the press (with all the usual qualifications about how the press is not a monolith) accepted the notion that the fate of the nation rides on the fate of a presidency. This idea of "presidential nation," as it has been called, dates to Woodrow Wilson and is basic Democratic doctrine, the writers on the "imperial presidency" of Richard Nixon notwithstanding. Down through the years, Republican nominees often have accepted the idea, but never to the extent that Democratic candidates—or journalists—have. This year was no exception, as witness the abundance of stories about the United States from 1980 to 1992, effectively tying the state of the nation to the state of the presidency.

The idea of "presidential nation" makes a hash of any (typically Republican) effort to limit, either for reasons of constitutionality or policy, what the government ought to do. Its most simplistic expression—visible in the questions reporters asked of the candidates this year—is the belief that the President is responsible for the nation's social and economic conditions. This rationale holds not only that the President must *do something* about what putatively ails us, but also that what is done—by the federal government—will do the trick. Where was the much vaunted press skepticism when we needed it? Reporters could have perused a vast literature on the limits of social and economic policy. The charitable explanation is that most reporters have yet to sample it.

Included within the idea of presidential nation is the notion of the President (again, traceable to Wilson) constantly explaining to the people what they really want and how to achieve it. Having absorbed this perspective, the press reported accordingly. This particular bias had to help Bill Clinton, a policy wonk whose ability to speak in complete and complex sentences drew constant (and predictable) notice, even as it worked against George Bush, whose Bushisms were the subject of constant (and predictable) lampooning.



This said, however, the press coverage was so uneven that it is obtuse to deny any active or conscious bias. Indeed, I agree with my predecessor of some years ago in this space, Fred Barnes, who says that in 1992 the press crossed an important line, casting off even the pretense of fairness that in campaign years past had restrained them, making their work much more "actively" biased.

Print- and picture-heads alike were agog about Clinton and spiteful about Bush, treating the candidates in ways that will merit the attention of dispassionate scholars. Consider the *Washington Post*, a major sinner. Ombudsman Joann Byrd went so far as to call the paper's coverage "very lopsided." Reviewing seventy-three days' worth of pictures, headlines, and news stories, Byrd found about the same number of "positives" for both (175 for Bush, 195 for Clinton). But Bush racked up 184 negatives, compared to only 52 for Clinton. On the *Post*'s front page, Bush was portrayed negatively more than twice as often. Granted, Bush ran a lousy campaign,

Terry Eastland is a resident fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C.

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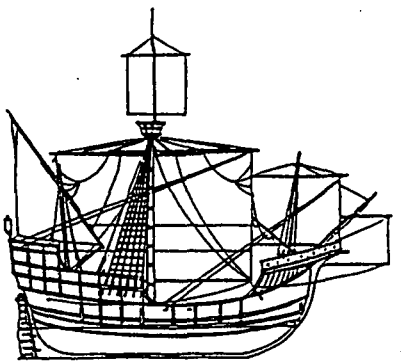
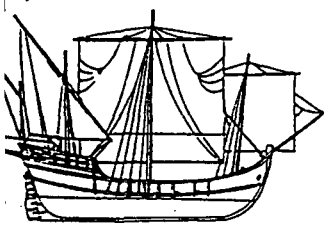


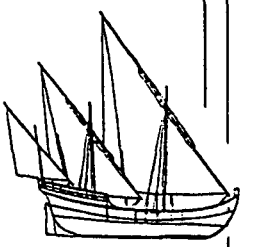
Should We Celebrate or Repent?

The 500th anniversary of the first voyage of Christopher Columbus has spurred a host of attempts to recast the history of the Americas. Many of the revisionists are trying to use the past as a tool to advance "politically correct" goals. In doing so they profoundly distort the historical record of Columbus the man and of the societies that have sprung from his explorations.



For many critics, the presence of evil in American history totally discredits the "myth" that the United States is a just society. Indeed, they have made the Columbus anniversary an occasion to reject all of Western culture. At the other extreme, many defenders seem to think that any criticism of the United States will lead to total denunciation.

Robert Royal examines the available facts about Columbus and the Spaniards, their first New World contacts, Christian missionaries, North American Indian tribes, and the early British and French settlements. His wide-ranging accounts of the complicated interaction between Europeans and Native Americans suggest that little of the early cultural mixing in the Americas can be characterized in strict black-and-white terms.



Universal ideas of human rights and international law that slowly emerged from Western reflection on indigenous peoples, Royal concludes, are major contributions for which we should all be grateful.

Robert Royal is vice president and Olin Fellow in Religion and Society at the Ethics and Public Policy Center.

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and as an incumbent had to answer for more than his challengers did. He was bound to rack up a lot of negative stories. But obviously there was no oversupply of negative pieces about Clinton. Moreover, as Byrd pointed out, the *Post* published positively beatific articles about Clinton. One declared that Clinton has "The Aura," which is to be found in "his eyes . . . in his body language, casual yet commanding."

My guess is that Bush would come out on the short end of a positive-negative count at every major newspaper other than the strongly anti-Clinton *Washington Times*. But the question of bias is not exhausted by this kind of inquiry. There's also the media's conduct during the presidential debates. A special place in the 1992 Hall of Shame goes to ABC's Carole Simpson, the moderator of the "Oprah"-style second debate in Richmond, for mocking Bush ("Who would like to begin, the 'Education President'?") while treating Clinton as if he had, well, The Aura.

Then there was the PBS election night special, "The Finish Line," which included Hodding Carter, Kenneth Walker, Daniel Schorr, Terry Gross, and Nancy Dickerson. No balance there. Worse, cheers broke out when it was announced that Ohio had put Clinton over the electoral top. We taxpayers pay for this.

Then there were the stories barely if at all pursued. I'll mention two big ones, the first involving Gennifer Flowers's tapes of her conversations with Governor Clinton. They have him saying, about the alleged affair: "If everybody's on the record denying it, you've got no problem." And, about whether she had ever talked to him about the state job he gave her: "If they ever ask if you talked to me about it, you can just say no." Ordinarily, the press is profoundly interested in exposing people who traffic in lies—the Clinton presidency likely will test the White House press corps—but few news organizations pursued this story, some newspapers (including the *Post*) even failing to print a full transcript of Flowers's tapes, on the grounds that the recordings were unverified—an absurd technicality, since Clinton didn't deny that it was his voice on the tapes, and he actually apologized to Mario Cuomo for the bad things he'd said about him during the taped conversation. Imagine if

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the press had aggressively asked Clinton about whether he had told Flowers to lie; imagine, too, if the press had pursued the story of how Clinton put Flowers on the state payroll, bumping a black employee named Charlotte Perry.

The other story concerns the indictment of Caspar Weinberger issued by Iran-contra independent counsel Lawrence Walsh on the Friday before Election Day. The press and the Clinton campaign seized on a note in the indictment as the latest and best evidence that Bush had not been telling the truth about when he first knew the Reagan Administration was swapping arms for hostages. Bush's late surge in the polls would not have been enough to put him over the top, but his momentum quickly stopped as he faced endless press inquiries about the Weinberger note, which was no "smoking gun." (Is the whole show going to be about Iran-contra? the President asked his inquisitor, Frank Sesno, on CNN's "Newsmaker Sunday.")

What's important here is not so much the press's total lack of curiosity about any link between Walsh's office and the Clinton campaign, whose press release attacking Bush was dated the day before the indictment was returned (a misprint, said the folks in Little Rock, and the press asked nothing more). No, what's most important is the complete lack of inquiry into political motivation on Walsh's part. A more scrupulous prosecutor would have avoided even the appearance of plunging his office into politics on the eve of a presidential vote. Just as he would have refused to hire James Brosnahan, a partisan Democrat who opposed the Rehnquist, Bork, and Thomas nominations, *and* the Gulf War, to prosecute Weinberger. Any fair reading of the Weinberger indictments (as well as other principal papers in this case) suggests that Walsh believes Reagan and Bush conspired to cover up as much as they could about Iran-contra, a case he cannot prove. There were therefore many good reasons for the press to go after Walsh. But Bush was the target—the only target.

I have heard the various explanations for the pro-Clinton, anti-Bush bias. I don't buy the self-serving one, that a new President would be a better story to cover. Closer to the mark is what some reporters were saying when the snow was falling last February in New Hampshire—that they think Bill Clinton will be a good President, and good for the country. There was something generational taking place as well—that like most of those covering him, Clinton and his wife are boomers whose sensibility was shaped by the political and cultural left of the 1960s. And there was a touch of hubris—that, like us, he's smart, a product of all the right schools, a man just for *our* time, and, you know, our time has come.

Will the honeymoon last? Ten days after the election, Michael Kelly of the *New York Times* reported the contents of a confidential memorandum (fourteen pages, single-spaced) co-authored last April by Clinton campaign manager James Carville. The memo proposed "one of the most ambitious campaigns of political rehabilitation ever attempted." It included "the construction of a new image for Mr. and Mrs. Clinton: an honest, plain-folks idealist and his loving wife." It recommended that Bill Clinton appear on a television talk show to play the saxophone and make fun of himself for saying he'd tried marijuana but not inhaled. And it put forth ideas designed to counter the perception of Hillary Clinton as unaffectionate and preoccupied with power and career. Of course, the Clintons followed the memo almost to a tee.

Kelly bent over backwards in the Clintons' favor: "What the memorandum told the Clintons to do, and what they did, does not show chicanery," he wrote. "The goal [as stated by the Clinton camp] was not to present a false image of the couple." Less credulous reporters may come to think that they—and the American people—were had. And more industrious reporters will discover that on September 24 the *Times* carried a front-page story in which Hillary Clinton "dismiss[ed] the notion that there was ever a strategy to warm her up." Had Kelly pulled up this bit of reporting from his paper's files (I'll give him the benefit of the doubt), he could have pursued a question that seems to recur with our new White House inhabitants: Were they telling the truth? ❐

Spearheading The Recovery Of Traditional Values

If you think mindless radicalism has made a mess of society, schools, the economy, and our political institutions, you should see what it's doing to our churches. Formerly dignified and beautiful, America's major religious bodies are being run into the ground by middle-aged hippies who don't care what their vanishing parishioners think.

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Hit List

by James Bowman

It may not seem a significant coincidence to you, but the new *Dracula*'s coming along at the same time as *The American Spectator*'s Twenty-Fifth Anniversary got me to thinking. To amuse myself, I made a very personal choice of the ten best and the ten worst general-release American films of the past twenty-five years, and I found a curious asymmetry. For while egregiously bad movies were fairly evenly distributed throughout the period, the really great ones seemed to be concentrated in the earlier part of it. As I scratched my head over this, along came Francis Ford Coppola's version of the movies' most famous vampire to remind me of the reason for it.

My top ten, in roughly chronological order, were: *The Graduate, Midnight Cowboy, Patton, Five Easy Pieces, The Godfather* (Parts I and II counted as one but not Part III), *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, Star Wars* (but not the sequels), *The Deer Hunter, Batman* (but not the sequel), and *Miller's Crossing*. It will be noticed that not only is there a gap of more than a decade in this listing between *The Deer Hunter* (1978) and *Batman* (1989), but there is also a huge gap in style. For at some point during those years, Hollywood discovered post-modernism—that self-conscious, self-referential, ironic style which now seems to have entrenched itself in the American film industry forever.

Dracula, like *Batman Returns*, Clint Eastwood's *Unforgiven*, and so many of the industry's top hits these days, is a good example of the post-modern style. It is one of those films that is more about other films than it is about the real world. All of them are filled with striking images and witty dialogue and clever ideas, but all of them are dramatically incomprehensible apart from the cinematic tradition to which they make continual reference. In other words, it is now impossible to make a movie about vampires without acknowledging that vampires exist only in the movies. Once that fact is established, anything is possible—anything except the kind of artistic greatness that in retrospect seems to have been comparatively common in the 1970s. This *Dracula* has given up trying to scare us, but still insists, "It's only a movie."

We can date the post-modernist revolution in Hollywood to the success of Steven Spielberg's *Indiana Jones* series. You can see what I mean if you compare Indy with Luke Skywalker of *Star Wars*. Luke, for all his futuristic accoutrements, was an old-fashioned hero in an old-fashioned situation. The world he lived in may have been unfamiliar, even fantastical, but as a character he was as familiar as Gary Cooper's Sergeant York or Jimmy Stewart's Mr. Smith. Above all, he didn't *know* he was a hero. He may have been a simple kind of guy, as heroes often are, but he was recognizably human. Indiana Jones, on the other hand, knows nothing *but* his own heroism. He is in no way an ordinary guy but a kind of madman, obsessed with being a hero. Spielberg runs him through his hair-raising adventures and impossibly close shaves at such speed that he has no time to establish an existence independent of the self-consciously Hollywood-heroic framework set up to contain him.

It is this framework that is the real hero of all three films. Spielberg cares nothing for Indy himself but, with a nod and a wink to the audience, dearly loves the heroic cinema that utterly defines him. The result is an almost balletic product that succeeds in amusing both as an homage to and as a send-up of the old-fashioned Hollywood action film. Proclaiming that "the hero is back," the Indiana Jones chronicles in fact replaced him for millions who didn't know he had been gone with a post-modernist simulacrum. From that time onward, heroes—at least heroes like Luke Skywalker rather than Batman—disappeared for good.

You've got to admire the skill with which *Batman* and *Miller's Crossing* both make use of their pop culture conventions—the comic book and the gangster film respectively—in order to help bring into focus what is really a very serious and humane view of the world. The trouble is that such a technique is inevitably tainted with the mockery out of which it rises. Both films were added to the top ten because they were great of their kind—the kind that Hollywood has been producing for the past ten years or more. But I am not altogether sure that they deserve their place at the expense of such great pre-post-modernist films of the seventies as *A Clockwork Orange, Deliverance,* or *Taxi Driver*.

What those films have in common with the first eight on the list is that they entered into the folk consciousness. Just as poetry gives us the language by which we define and bring into intellectual order the chaos of experience, so films at their best give us the images. The "generation gap," both its myth and its reality, was never better symbolized than in *The Graduate*, and the eternal tension between American innocence and experience never found a better embodiment than in *Midnight Cowboy*. A similar ten-

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sion, between the elite and the popular, finds expression in both *Patton* and *Five Easy Pieces* and both in their very different ways will be long remembered for their images of the more or less unsatisfactory compromises that Americans have always been forced to make between these two opposites.

The Godfather is perhaps as near as we shall ever get to the great American movie, a terrifying and beautiful image of the immigrant experience, and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* is a particularly moving and updated version of that declaration of independence which so much of American art, culture, and politics reduces to. And if *Star Wars* forges the classic American alliance between idealism and initiative, teens and technology, and redefines for us optimism and success, *The Deer Hunter* comes closer than any other film I know to an unusual but unflinching American stare into the black maw of defeat and failure. Nothing since has done anything like it, and very little since has made itself so much a part of our national consciousness in the way that movies used to do not infrequently. You can thank post-modernism for that, too.

Such films appeal to universal experience and, where they have a "message" beyond sympathy for their characters, it is at least a true one—which is what sets them apart from those on the ten worst list. For this it would have been easy to choose obvious dogs like *Ishtar* or *Hudson Hawk*, but I found it more interesting to focus on malicious, mendacious propaganda rather than mere incompetence. It is among the award-winners, the prestige projects, and the box-office hits that we may find those gems of awfulness whose claim to public attention and esteem is based on fantasy or falsehood. And it is more interesting to expose such meretricious trash, so often cried up by the cultural elite, than to pile on with the rest when some lame inanity like *Bonfire of the Vanities* is gang-tackled.

The ten worst films of the last twenty-five years, then, are *Easy Rider, Zabriskie Point, Capricorn One, Kramer vs. Kramer, Apocalypse Now, E.T., Field of Dreams, Born on the Fourth of July, Fried Green Tomatoes*, and *JFK*. Oliver Stone, you will not be surprised to see, made two of them. What all these films have in common is not that they are ill-made. On the contrary, they were all more or less successful at the box office and convinced a lot of people that they were deeply meaningful, even great films. But they all had something to sell, and what they were selling was completely bogus. The first two seem almost too easy a mark now. They were selling the counterculture of the late sixties, and watching such puerile moral fables today is all that it takes to explain why Yippies eventually turned into yuppies.

One illustration of the way in which less changes among the bad than among the good is the constancy of the left-wing conspiracy movie. From *Easy Rider* to *Capricorn One*, which was one of a spate of paranoid films made in the wake of Watergate, to *JFK*, which tied up into a neat little package every wacko theory about how evil right-wingers started with the assassination of Kennedy and then went on to screw up the rest of the world, for twenty years it has been possible to make a little money, at any rate, out of pretending to find someone in power who is responsible for everything that goes wrong. Vietnam, as the most convenient symbol for things going wrong, has thus provided the natural setting for right-wing bad-guys like the evil Colonel Kurtz in *Apocalypse Now* or the evil Sergeant Barnes in *Platoon.* These men symbolize those base human instincts which, but for the civilizing influence of progressive movie-makers, might drive all men to be conservatives.

But bad films do not have to be about right-wing villainy. They can also adopt the fashionable language of pop psychology to sell the bogus creed of self-fulfillment. *Kramer vs. Kramer* sets up a debate between responsible behavior and the creed of self-realization as if they were equals, as if Meryl Streep's ridiculous cant about "self-esteem" and having left her husband and child in order to "find" herself had to be taken seriously. As Dr. Johnson said with characteristic brutality, "the woman's a whore and there's an end on't." Likewise, *Born on the Fourth of July* is what comes of taking self-pity seriously and indulging it, for both political and psychological reasons, instead of calling it by its right name.

Beyond the political badness, beyond even the psychobabbling badness, there is the sentimental badness, which is the worst badness of all because it is not just based on falseness but is false all the way through. True, sentimentality has always been endemic in Hollywood, but the kind that seems to have come to the fore in recent years, especially in truly breathtakingly awful films like *E.T., Field of Dreams*, and *Fried Green Tomatoes*, seems to me to represent a particularly virulent strain of it—one that is the corollary of post-modernism's detachment from reality in favor of the movie dream-world where anything can happen and so nothing of any interest does.

What worries me most about the last twenty-five years is the apparent degradation of the critical faculty by which audiences should be able to recognize such political, psychological, or sentimental claptrap. That may be why, ultimately, if there are no more truly bad films than there used to be, there are so many fewer truly good ones. ❐

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SCREENING HISTORY

Gore Vidal

Harvard University Press / 96 pages / $14.95

reviewed by JOHN SIMON

Gore Vidal's *Screening History* comprises three lectures in the field of American Civilization that the author delivered at Harvard. The ostensible subject is how the movies, by their way of interpreting history, affect our lives. The actual subject is how the movies have been affecting Gore Vidal. The actual *actual* subject is Gore Vidal: his thoughts, feelings, and such parts of his life as he cares to divulge. The trouble is that megalomania is more fun as a participatory activity than, as for Vidal's readers, a spectator sport.

Perhaps the best way to convey the essence of this short book (96 pages, but after you subtract ten for pictures, more like 86) is with a little *explication de texte.* Let's take a paragraph on page 17, from the first lecture, "The Prince and the Pauper," named after a movie that, in 1937, was a crucial influence on the 12-year-old Gore:

> From the earliest days, the movies have been screening history, and if one saw enough movies, one learned quite a lot of simple-minded history. Stephen [sic] Runciman and I met on an equal basis not because of my book *Julian*, which he had written about, but because I knew *his* field, thanks to a profound study of Cecil B. De Mille's *The Crusades* (1935), in which Berengaria, as played by Loretta Young, turns to her Lionheart husband and pleads, "Richard, you *gotta* save Christianity." A sentiment that I applauded at the time but came later to deplore.

You will notice the characteristic Vidal tone: at best, ironic; at worst, snotty. Unlike some writers' irony, which, though subtle, is always unmistakable, Vidal's is of a more ambiguous nature: often one can't be sure whether he is kidding or whether he means what he's saying. In a writer as shrewd as Vidal—and given the frequency of the occurrence—this cannot be accidental: he wants us not to be sure. Why? Because he makes outrageous statements that delight a certain type of reader, but strike another as ridiculous. Thanks to his ambiguity, Vidal can make Reader A believe that the author means it all, and Reader B (whatever he may suspect) not wish to risk being taken in by such an "obvious" irony. Not an unclever strategy.

"Quite a lot of simple-minded history." This could mean that, though oversimplified, history is still history in the movies. Or that it is balderdash, but what the world comes to believe, and so *becomes* history. Earlier, Vidal told us that "we perceive sex, say, not as it demonstrably is but as we think it ought to be as carefully distorted for us by the churches and the schools, by the press and by—triumphantly—the movies, which are, finally, the only validation to which that dull anterior world, reality, must submit." Note the ambiguity in this statement, too. Sex is a plain, good thing, demonstrable and undistorted. It is real. Along come religion, education, and journalism to distort it for us, make it bad. But now the movies "validate" sex for us; their "triumphant" distortion is better than "that dull anterior world, reality." So reality is dull, a bad thing? But, of course, we are meant to take that triumph of the movies as irony, right? So the movies are a terrible but wonderful thing that distorts the real; but, for making it, however mendaciously, wonderful, more power to them! We get lost in this hall of mirroring ironies.

Back, however, to our simple-minded movie-made history. It's distorted, but not *so* bad. Thus when Vidal encounters the eminent historian of the Crusades, Steven Runciman, he meets him "on an equal basis." Reader A takes this at face value: someone as smart as Vidal can learn from movies seen as a boy about as much as a distinguished historian can from a lifetime of study. When Reader B demurs, Vidal retorts, "You fool, can't you hear the irony? Can't you see I'm joking?" Well, but Runciman has written about Vidal's historical novel *Julian.* We don't know whether this means that he reviewed it, and, if so, how favorably, but the mere fact that the famed historian took notice implies that he took Vidal the historical fictionist seriously. Yet that is not the basis for the equal footing, says Vidal with charming self-depreciation; the real reason is that Vidal, at age ten, saw De Mille's *The Crusades*, and so knows all one needs to know about the Third Crusade when, however many years later, the two men meet. Among other accomplishments, Vidal clearly has a photographic memory.

But what are we to make of "thanks to a profound study" of De Mille's film? Vidal may have seen *The Crusades* since, perhaps even more than once. But no, the tone is manifestly ironic; the picture is silly, and Loretta Young doesn't even speak proper English: "You *gotta* save Christianity," she says. But ironies contain further ironies: the way movies screen history *becomes* history, for all of us, and so whatever Runciman may have unearthed through research pales beside Vidal's knowledge of screened history. That *gotta* is from the heart, and the heart has its reasons, which mere historical reason knows nothing of. I wonder, incidentally, whether the always ladylike Loretta Young really said *gotta*. And whether Vidal—if he saw the movie only in 1935, and if he doesn't have, on top of his photographic memory, a phonographic ear—can be sure of how she spoke that line. At age ten, not even Vidal would have thought ill enough of *gotta* to bother noticing it.

Now what about that last sentence? Vidal informs us that in his first decade he was still a believer in Christianity, but that, as he grew older and became an

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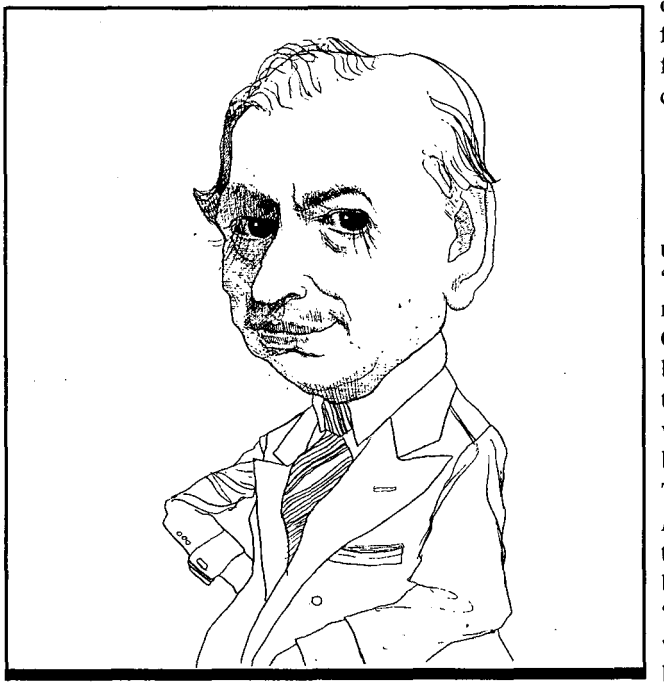
atheist, the piety he had applauded came to look deplorable. That is his privilege, but why tell us about it here? What has it to do with the Third Crusade, Steven Runciman, screening history, or American Civilization? Nothing; it has to do with Vidal's considering his opinions, relevant or not, of patent interest to all.

The passage also illustrates another leitmotif of the book: Vidal's personal contacts with all kinds of celebrities. Virtually whenever Gore drops a famous name in any context, good or bad, by the next sentence—or, at the latest, paragraph—he has came to know this celebrity. The celebrity may be ridiculed by him now (perhaps even then), but meet him or her he did. Often he gets to know the person intimately; on a few occasions, the meeting doesn't quite take place. At a 1939 outdoor performance of *Turandot* at the Baths of Caracalla, when Gore is fourteen and touring Europe with a group, Mussolini is sitting next to them. (What good tickets the group was able to get! How much in advance did they buy them?) "As Mussolini passed within a yard of me, I got a powerful whiff of cologne, which struck me as degenerate." (Vidal doesn't mention whether what he deplored at the time, he came later to applaud.) Anyway, he once saw, or whiffed, the Duce plain.

Similarly, he doesn't actually meet the loved and envied idol of his childhood, Mickey Rooney. But at the very moment he is delivering these William E. Massey Sr. Lectures at Harvard's Sanders Theater (a mighty big auditorium), Mickey is "at the bookstore of the Harvard Coop, autographing copies of his latest book." Which is better: autographing your book at a bookstore—something Vidal has, in any case, done countless times—or giving a series of lectures in Sanders Theater? Any fool can answer that question. But it takes a special kind of fool, if only by implication, to raise it.

Screening History, to repeat, is divided, like all gall, into three parts. The first lecture, "The Prince and the Pauper," is essentially about what movies meant to young Gore from age seven to when he enlisted in the Army to escape the horrors of his home and a couple of schools, horrors mitigated mainly by his steady moviegoing. "My life has paralleled, when not intersected, the entire history of the talking picture," he tells us ingenuously near the start. In consequence, it is not surprising that he often gets confused about whose effect on what he is talking about.

It seems that life with father Gene Vidal, Director of Air Commerce under FDR, and mother Nina Gore Vidal Auchincloss Olds—"a composite of Bette Davis and Joan Crawford" in looks, who, in her lifetime, drank "the equivalent of the Chesapeake Bay in vodka"—was not all that easy. And even though, never fear, the boy read books avidly, his voracity for the nepenthe of movies could climax in five movies a day. The one family member for whom he had and has



admiration and love was his maternal grandfather T. P. Gore, who, "at thirty-seven, having helped invent the state of Oklahoma—wit of this sort runs in our family—became a famous [four-term] senator." I have no idea what kind of wit it takes to invent Oklahoma, but the kind needed for this sort of remark runs in the grandson's veins.

Three movies impressed the boy especially: *The Mummy* (1932), his first, with Boris Karloff ("the effect of that film proved to be lifelong"); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1935—"I really wanted to be a movie star; specifically, I wanted to be Mickey Rooney, and to play Puck, as he had done"); and, above all, *The Prince and the Pauper* (1937), as we shall presently see. In the meantime, Gore had achieved the first of his several fifteen-minute famousnesses. At age ten, he flew an airplane by himself. Taught to fly by his father (who, however, stayed on terra firma with the Pathé News crew), and accompanied only by daddy's assistant, who knew even less about flying than his young pilot, Gore landed the plane with only a slight bump. For the newsreel cameras, he had to deliver a line his father taught him, "It was as easy as riding a bicycle." This was not only untrue, it also trapped Gore "in the wrong script." His screen test, as his father had called it, was a failure: instead of a movie star, he became only "a newsreel personage." Nevertheless, there are enough allusions in the text to the flight of "the Boy Airman" to make us feel as if we too had seen, if not five movies, at least five identical newsreels in one day.

"Should I capture my family [including at least one stepfather] upon my page," Vidal tells us, "the result is [sic] like a bad movie—or, worse, a good one." Clearly, then, seeing movies becomes an escape from living them, as, paradoxically, living vicariously what is screened becomes more life than life itself. This is where *The Prince and the Pauper*, starring the real-life twins Bobby and Billy Mauch, becomes particularly important. "I wanted to be not one but two," we learn. "Suddenly, I wanted to be not Puck; or even Mickey Rooney. I wanted to be myself, twice." There speaks the incipient narcissist, who immediately goes on the defensive, "I dare not speculate what the school of Vienna . . . would make of this," and turns the whole thing into a jest: "I refer, of course, to the Riding School." The arch reference to the Spanische Reitschule is more apt than Vidal, a great one for horsing around, may realize.

He considers his response normal, "particularly if one were the actors' age"; evidently he has not mastered the subjunctive in English. There is nothing contrary to fact about this statement, Vidal being then the twins' age, so the

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indicative, "if one was" is called for. "A palpable duplicate of oneself would be the ideal companion," he writes, without specifying for what: conversation, games, sex? The answer is contained, I think, in the word *palpable*.

"Narcissistic," he insists, should not be a pejorative: "Generally, a narcissist is someone better looking than you are," explaining, we are to infer, why other men call him that. Moreover, it's an epithet "applied to those 'liberals' who prefer to improve the lives of others rather than to exploit them." A doubly bizarre notion: Why would anyone call altruism or philanthropy narcissistic? (Vidal is playing the martyr here.) And who has ever accused Vidal of philanthropy? Has anyone seen his good works—by which I do not refer to his novels?

"The childhood desire to be a twin does not seem to me to be narcissistic in the vulgar Freudian sense." How about in the refined Freudian sense? "After all," he goes on, "one is oneself; and the other other." But just how other is such an other? Is he, in fact, "other" at all? What could be clearer than that "I wanted to be myself, twice," which, a couple of paragraphs later, Vidal has already forgotten. Now comes the prize: "Is it not that search for likeness, that desire and pursuit of the whole—as Plato has Aristophanes remark—that is the basis of all love?" Plato does not put it exactly like that; *that* comes from the title of a homosexual novel by Frederick Rolfe, alias Baron Corvo, with the title punning on "hole." "As no one has ever found wholeness in another human being, no matter of what sex," Vidal continues, "the twin is the closest that one can ever come toward wholeness with another. . . ." Even the elementary schools of Vienna might question this proposition, and wonder whether Vidal isn't protesting too much. "I certainly did not want to be two of me, as one seemed more than enough," he explains modestly, "even in a famous family." I wouldn't stop at "family"; how about "the world"?

But what, in any case, has this long digression on Vidal's quest for a *Doppelgänger* to do with "screening history," the alleged subject of these lectures? It has to do only with Vidal's pleasure in washing his dirty laundry in public—especially since he thinks he can make us believe that it was clean in the first place. "Something of an avatar of Mark Twain," he calls himself; could the handsome young Samuel Clemens be the ideal with whom Gore wishes to be entwinned, or entwined?

One reads on, wondering how much any of this has to do with movies, screening history, and American Civilization, and how much of it is simply a narcissistic ego trip? As when, for instance, we are casually apprised that in the "oval drawing-room of the White House . . . I solved for an Attorney General the mystery of his bad character." Now there is something one would like to hear more about, however tangential it may be, but Vidal's natural modesty evidently forbids his going into details.

To be sure, the movies allow Vidal to get off some nice one-liners and epigrams. I rather like his foreseeing a presidential election in which "it will be Schwarzkopf versus Schwarzenegger." I also like the reference to Eddie Cantor's *Roman Scandals* as "another film that opened for me that door to the past where I have spent so much of my lifelong present." I am less impressed by "the loudly menacing Franklin D. Roosevelt, with a black spot—like a dog's—over his left eyebrow." Funnier is the notion that the Machiavellian musings of Henry VIII in *The Prince and the Pauper* were "perhaps addressed to the serfs at Warner Brothers, a studio known for its love of tradition, particularly the annual Christmas layoffs."

Such felicities are most interesting when they reveal the true Vidal, as when he speaks of that film's appeal to the altruism of youthful viewers: "Now altruism is a brief phase through which some adolescents must pass. It is rather like acne." Amusing, but if that is the truth about Vidal and altruism, why should he worry about being vilified as one of those narcissistic "liberals" who want to improve the lot of others? Surely his altruism, like his acne, is well behind him.

The second lecture, "Fire Over England," is particularly fatuous. Its main point is that because Hollywood movies were so full of pro-British (and, to a lesser extent, pro-French) propaganda, Roosevelt and Churchill were able to drag us into World War II, something Vidal would have had us stay out of. He can be quite witty, e.g., about "the long-awaited and planned-for war with Japan. A war of Ideas, as always. *We* had the idea that the Pacific Ocean should be ours; they thought it should be theirs. Plainly, two powerful ideologies on a collision course." And he proceeds to make lusty fun of "gallant-little-England pictures" and such. But what, I wonder, would have happened to Vidal, not to mention his apartment in Rome and house in—is it Portofino?—if America had stayed out of that war? One did not deliver lectures like these under the Führer, or even under his more odorous counterpart, the Duce.

On and on marches Vidal's snottiness, a typical cheap shot being a reference to "Rafael Sabatini, the Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., of his day." Yet I cannot help wondering just how many Harvard students, the ostensible chief beneficiaries of Vidal's wit, knew who Rafael Sabatini (the author of *Captain Blood*)—or, for that matter, Arthur Schlesinger—was? I say this not out of rancor toward my alma mater, but out of disappointment with the Harvard University Press, which published this book without correcting Vidal's gross mistakes. Gore cannot even manage those

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simple Latin tags with which he tries to convey to us that the Exeter education he repeatedly sneers at was nevertheless not wasted on him. "*In hoc signes*" we read, and "*annum mirabilis*." "I was subjected to Latin irregular verbs for four years," he writes with mingled contempt and pride about Exeter Academy. Too bad he wasn't subjected to declensions and noun genders as well.

But, then, his English is often hardly better than his Latin. He commits the gallicism "irreal" for unreal, the pleonasms "general consensus" and "ludic game" (whose Latin cognates likewise bypassed him at Exeter), "quotidianal" for quotidian. His syntax can be as faulty as "I was sent to a school for disturbed rich boys, although I was neither disturbed nor my father rich" or "The Eleanor screened in the Rose Garden is not what it [sic] looks to be. . . ." But such patent offenses against English are not caught by the Harvard University Press either.

Still, Vidal is funny: "I once heard [Henry Luce] say to my mother that his famous wife, Clare Boothe Luce, did not understand him. I was thrilled: this was MGM dialogue at its best." Or scathingly sardonic, as when he refers to Orson Welles as "a miracle of empathy . . . he knew all the gradations of despair the oyster experienced as it slid down his gullet." Such antihedonistic sniping would, however, be stronger coming from a less sybaritic mouth. Again, "More than once, [Bush] has confided to us that he has a problem with what he calls 'the vision thing,' not to mention the English language, which we at Exeter always thought somewhat neglected at Andover." A touching bit of old-school-tie loyalty from the otherwise Exeter-goring Gore, but rather undercut by the howlers cited above.

For related reasons, one wonders about Vidal's reference to "Roosevelt and Churchill, two powerful demagogues for whom the actual fate of nations must have been as unreal as a play is to a star when he is not himself at centerstage." Who is our concerned isolationist to talk about FDR and Churchill as self-centered thespians, mindful only of their own stardom? They at least were actors on the great stage; Vidal, at best, is a prankster in the gallery, pelting them with his jeers. And, as you may well ask yourself, what does all this have to do with the topic of the lectures?

We come now to the third of these, "Lincoln." Here the point seems to be to show that, first of all, American history has been screened less than other kinds; there are only a couple of films about Lincoln, and none about other great American historical figures. Furthermore, when someone like Lincoln is screened, he is glossily idealized. Honest Abe is turned into an abolitionist from a "unionist and would-be colonizer of the ex-slaves." Vidal can make sense: "The black population always got the point to the slave-owning Virginia founding fathers, which means that our history, *properly* screened, is a potential hornet's nest."

He quotes "the head of a network" to the effect that the American TV audience is not interested in Lincoln and the Civil War, though he does not name the network or its head; our muckraker knows on which side his bread is buttered. But he is amusing: "There is not much of an audience for strange stories about long-dead people who write with feathers."

And he does make same pertinent observations, however impertinently expressed. Thus about the Vietnam war: "This defeat, screened daily on television, was then metamorphosed into a total victory for the *Rambo* movies, films which [for "that"] not only convinced everyone that we had, thanks to Mr. Stallone, won that war but which [for "also"] made almost as much money at the world box office as we had wasted on the war itself." "In the end," he concludes, "who screens the history makes the history. . . . If I could not destroy Hollywood, I would buy it, as the *Tora! Tora! Tora!* folks are now doing." True enough, but, again, he may well be overestimating his hearers if he expects them to get that synecdoche.

He is best when not indulging in grand theories about the movies, but sticking to anecdotes about his own experiences in Hollywood, for example the story of how Frank Capra, originally scheduled to direct Vidal's *The Best Man*, proposed to make sentimental hash of it. This, of course, is the Capra whose "movies usually pitted the good guy, Jimmy Stewart, to be admired because he has been elected to the Senate without any understanding of politics, against the bad guys who want to build a dam when what the folks really need is a new river, or the other way around." And buried under all kinds of showing off (what JFK or the Duke of Windsor said to Gore) are some bitter basic truths. The problem the movies face trying to screen our past is that our "people have become so heterogeneous that many of them have little or nothing in common with one another, including often the English language. Plainly, it is not easy to inculcate patriotism when there is no agreed-on patria."

So what is Vidal's solution? To throw out our school curriculum as it is now constituted. He would make history—screened history—the spine of a twelve-year compulsory indoctrination. He would eliminate attempts at improvement of "reading skills," as "this is not going to happen for the third generation of TV-watchers, as well as computer-masters." True, perhaps, but will these take any more kindly to history than young Gore did to irregular Latin verbs? Where Vidal is nearer the mark is in having "always found it curious that the two things a human being must cope with all his life, his body and his money, are never explained to him at school. Few adults ever know where their liver is

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until too late, and few ever know where their money is until the Savings and Loan system collapses."

But he promptly lapses into sterile cynicism again, funny but wrong-headed: "Those interested in the arts would be strongly *dis*couraged from pursuing any of the arts. This will save many people from lifelong disappointment while limiting production, in the most Darwinian way, to the born artist who cannot be discouraged." There is a kind of callous near-truth to this. But the greater truth is that, though arts cannot be taught, art appreciation can, and without a public informed about art and able to discriminate between the genuine and the phony, we end up in the muck we are sloshing about in today.

Perhaps if education—including art education—were better, the melancholy proposition that drives these lectures, "Today, where literature was, movies are," might be at least partly reversed. Then Vidal would not have to lament that he is no longer "a famous novelist": "I am still alive but my category is not." Then he wouldn't have to worry about competition from television and movies. Unless, of course, the books he writes are poor stuff, only good for giving him fifteen minutes of fame apiece. In which case he may profit more from the status quo. ❐

KISSINGER: A BIOGRAPHY

Walter Isaacson

Simon & Schuster/893 pages/$30

reviewed by GEORGE SZAMUELY

When Walter Isaacson set out to write this biography, he had no trouble getting Henry Kissinger's full cooperation. Richard Nixon even granted the author no less than three interviews. Given the reception of *The Wise Men* (1986)—the story of six of the leading architects of the United States's Cold War foreign policy, which Isaacson co-authored with Evan Thomas—such assistance is not surprising: that book was almost universally praised for its scrupulous objectivity, its monumental scope, and its lively, lucid style.

Yet surprise should have been in order. For *The Wise Men*, though entertaining, was strikingly ambivalent on the most salient issues of the Cold War. The authors, for instance, found that their subjects "made anti-Communism dangerously rigid and U.S. commitments overly sweeping," that "they bore part of the responsibility for creating a world divided between East and West, overarmed and perpetually hovering at the brink." And the authors arrived at this conclusion: "All in all, it can be argued that by failing to anticipate the consequences of their words and actions, [the Wise Men] sowed the seeds of both the Vietnam tragedy and, ultimately, their own undoing."

Isaacson is an assistant managing editor of *Time* and it may be that these last sentences are the sort of bland equivocations to be expected from anyone who has put in time at that magazine. In fact, they express the standard post-Vietnam liberal position: Anti-Communism and the U.S. Cold War effort may have been justifiable while Stalin sat in the Kremlin, but they ceased to be so the moment he disappeared from the scene. The rift with China meant that the Marxist-Leninist world was so divided that we no longer had to worry about Communists running around in Rome or Saigon or Managua or Santiago.

Such assumptions have been fashionable for years, and Isaacson gives every indication of sharing most of them. But they are not the best qualification for writing biographies of the principal figures of the Cold War.

Isaacson, needless to say, subscribes to the conventional view that America's cause in Vietnam was hopeless and that the only reasonable policy the Nixon Administration could have pursued was unilateral withdrawal. (He even puts forward the notion shared by Senator John Kerry that had this been done all of the American POWs would have been released, just like that.)

What Isaacson will not entertain is the argument that Nixon and Kissinger tried to act honorably toward an ally while also securing the United States's own interests. Their policy combined escalation against—and concessions to—North Vietnam with promises of arms control treaties and trade agreements to the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, the opening to China would ensure that the two Communist giants would each try to outbid the other for U.S. favors.

The policy came to be known as "linkage." The problem was not that it was too complicated but that it was never really tried. There was never any serious danger of the United States walking out of the SALT negotiations because the Soviets were being insufficiently cooperative on Vietnam. Nor was there any serious danger of the United States halting troop withdrawals because Hanoi was showing signs of increasing belligerence. Kissinger has written with some justice of the pressures the Nixon Administration was under to go that extra mile to improve relations with the Soviet Union. Within the administration itself there was resistance to "linkage." The State Department, Kissinger noted, "was most eager for liberalizing East-West trade unilaterally . . . and above all for beginning SALT as soon as possible. Any White House directive to the contrary was interpreted with the widest possible latitude if it was not ignored altogether." As for the troop withdrawals, their popularity ensured their continuation, regardless of the military consequences.

A riskier alternative would have been for the administration to lead, rather than follow, public opinion. The bombing moratorium originating from the last

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days of LBJ could have been lifted and the so-called "honeymoon period" used for the launch of a massive offensive against North Vietnam. The war might have been won in 1969. Certainly Nixon would have had problems with Congress and the media, but he was to get that anyway. And putting forward the image of a strong President would only have improved his standing in the polls.

Instead of victory, however, we got the 1973 Paris Accords. Even they would have been unattainable, according to both Nixon and Kissinger, had the administration not escalated U.S. military activity. The bombing of the North Vietnamese sanctuaries in Cambodia in 1969, the dispatch of ground forces there in 1970, and the bombing of Hanoi and the mining of Haiphong (resulting in the destruction of Soviet ships) in 1972 all served to give South Vietnam a fighting chance.

In giving short shrift to this reasoning, Isaacson presents arguments of his own that are laughably confused. He accepts that by signing the 1973 Paris Agreement, the North Vietnamese had accepted the existence of a non-Communist regime in Saigon for the first time. But he has to prove that this had nothing to do with the defeat of Hanoi's 1972 offensive and its fear of a re-elected Nixon's launch of a major bombing campaign. No, it was the Russians who helped out. Again and again, Isaacson repeats that "Hanoi was being isolated internationally," that "trade benefits . . . had been the quid pro quo for Moscow's tacit help in the 1972 Vietnam negotiations."

But if that was so, why would the Russians risk jeopardizing the May 1972 Moscow summit—out of which would come SALT and lucrative trade agreements—by sanctioning Hanoi's 1972 invasion? Isaacson offers his own answer: "Linkage was becoming a looking-glass phenomenon: the American side was the one that seemed more eager for a summit, and Moscow even had the audacity to send a note warning Washington that restraint in the face of Hanoi's invasion would improve its prospects at the May summit." Exactly. What made the Paris Agreement possible was not the goodwill of Moscow but the efficacious use of force in Indochina.

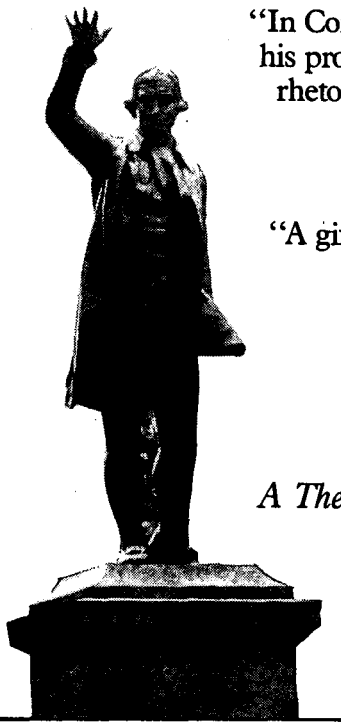
Once Congress outlawed the use of force in Indochina, the fall of South Vietnam became inevitable, an outcome Isaacson dismisses with predictable smugness: "When the U.S. government finally abandoned its policy of force in Indochina," he muses, "it was slowly able to rehabilitate its reputation at home and abroad, which was probably the best way to increase its global influence." This argument seems debatable, to say the least. The post-Vietnam era was not the most successful one for the spread of American "global influence." As he watched South Vietnam collapse and millions of its people fall under the sway of the most brutal kind of Communist dictatorship, Kissinger distinguished himself from many in Washington by passing up the opportunity to indulge in such frivolous and sententious reflections.

Kissinger has had many critics among both liberals and conservatives. But only liberals have repeatedly and unfairly called into question his sense of honor and seriousness of purpose. Isaacson's biography is far more balanced than Seymour Hersh's exercise in sustained viciousness, *The Price of Power*. He nonetheless is consistently supercilious and moralistic, and follows Hersh in portraying Kissinger as a devious, obsequious fellow always eager to play both sides of the street. Isaacson accounts for everything he dislikes about Kissinger's foreign policy in terms of his personality, and accounts for Kissinger's personality in terms of his childhood experiences. Anything Kissinger says or does—whether as an adolescent or as a young man or as a university professor—is treated as a signpost for what was to come in the Nixon White House. The problem is that Isaacson presents so many mutually incompatible characterizations that one gets the impression that even after completing a massive biography he still does not have a clue as to what his subject is really about.

The roots of Kissinger's conduct, Isaacson suggests, lie in the misguided attitudes he acquired arriving in the United States at the age of 15 as a German-Jewish refugee:

> A desire to be accepted, a tendency to be distrustful and insecure: these were

"The greatest living Irishman on the greatest Irishman who ever lived."
—**Paul Johnson, *The Independent***



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"A gift to anyone who wants to understand politics."—***The New Criterion***

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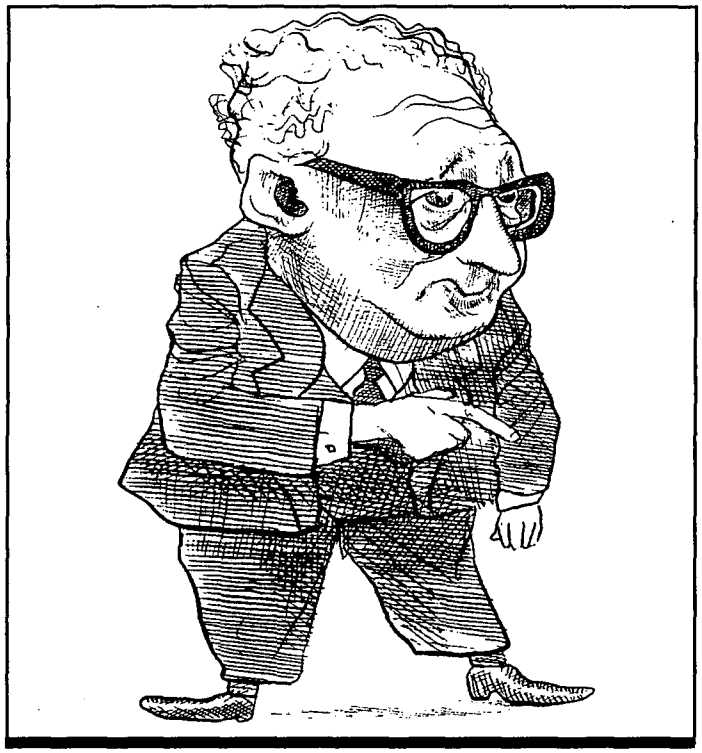
understandable reactions to a childhood upended by one of the most gruesome chapters in human history. Kissinger's desire for social and political acceptance—and his yearning to be liked—was unusually ardent, so much so that it led him to compromise his beliefs at times.

Then there was his outrageous reluctance to think of himself as a victim. An indignant Isaacson announces that Kissinger "minimized the traumas he faced as a child." "[His] childhood friends," he continues, "regard [this] as an act of denial and self-delusion. Some of them see his escape from memory as a key to his legendary insecurities. The child who had to pretend to be someone else so that he could get into soccer games . . . became an adult who was prone to deceit and self-deception in the pursuit of acceptance."

Such a characterization might sound plausible if one did not know anything at all about Kissinger. But how can a man with his thick Central European accent or his intellectual interest in Metternich and Spengler or his heavy Germanic prose be described as "ardent in the pursuit of acceptance"? Isaacson undercuts his own argument by showing how close Kissinger continued to be to his parents throughout his career, even having the impertinence to criticize him for his "sentimental streak" in this regard.

But Isaacson has to build his case. He traces the familiar path of Kissinger's career through Harvard, where along the way he picks up the usual malicious academic backbiting. Typically, he has nothing to say about how Kissinger's intellectual development shaped his actions in power. He writes of Kissinger's bestselling *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* without ever troubling himself to discuss Kissinger's arguments. He gleefully reports that a number of Rand Corporation luminaries hated the book, but never explains why. Since it was this book that launched Kissinger's career as a policy-maker, Isaacson's omission is all the more reprehensible. It is of a piece with his almost exclusive interest in gossip and office politics.

As for Kissinger's years in power, Isaacson's psychologizing foreshadows the inevitable litany of charges that he will level. What is different is the slipperiness of his method. He recounts the familiar allegation that in the 1968 presidential election Kissinger offered his services to both Nixon and Humphrey. After giving the impression that this did indeed happen, Isaacson admits that no evidence has come to light to support his charge. When it comes to the issue of the so-called "secret" bombing of North Vietnamese sanctuaries in Cambodia in 1969, Isaacson is at his most devious. First, he follows William Shawcross in charging that it was the bombing that led the "Communist camps to disperse over a larger area." A little later, though, he admits that the critical event took place not in 1969, but in April 1970 when Marshal Lon Nol, the new Cambodian chief, "ordered the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong to leave Cambodia immediately. Instead, the Vietnamese Communists launched an assault on the Cambodian government." They left their sanctuaries, invaded the Cambodian interior, and besieged Phnom Penh. But a few pages later, Isaacson is contradicting himself again. In May 1970, when U.S. forces went into Cambodia to save it from being taken over by the North Vietnamese, "the nation's descent into hell had begun. Every dire prediction of those opposed to the invasion came true. . . . The war widened. . . . Cambodia inextricably became ensnared in the Vietnam conflict it had avoided for so long." In other words, it was not the North Vietnamese attempt to take over Cambodia that "ensnared" that nation in "the Vietnam conflict." No, it was the United States's faltering attempts to preserve Cambodia's sovereignty that did the trick.



Soon this argument becomes too ludicrous even for Isaacson, and he changes tack to suggest that it would have been better to have let Hanoi take over in 1970 than have the Khmer Rouge come to power in 1975. It is true that the North Vietnamese were a less gruesome crowd than the Cambodian Communists. But since the Khmer Rouge were clients of the North Vietnamese, it is difficult to see how anyone in 1970 could have sat around and made these nice distinctions. It would certainly have been odd to try to save South Vietnam from North Vietnamese Communists but not Cambodia.

American foreign policy during the Kissinger years has always left liberals in a quandary. On the one hand, they liked the goals. Détente, arms control, the opening to China, the liquidation of America's involvement in Vietnam were all things liberals had been pining for. The suggestion that national interest should prevail over ideology had also become liberal orthodoxy, as the bloody mess in Indochina appeared to be bringing the Cold War "containment" policy into disrepute. In claiming to be seeking nothing more than a balance of power, the Nixon Administration was contenting itself with a modest aspiration.

Yet liberals have serious problems with Nixon and Kissinger. And this has nothing to do with their alleged devious style, which was certainly no greater than that of their predecessors. Nor does it have anything to do with their lack of

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internationalist goals like human rights. (The most scathing pages of *Kissinger* are devoted to Senator Henry Jackson who; in linking U.S.-Soviet trade agreements with the exit of Soviet Jews, was precisely trying to add a moral dimension to American foreign policy.)

What liberals did not like about the Nixon Administration was that for all the modish rhetoric of "charting a new course," its actual foreign policy continued to be stubborn old "containment," updated to take into account the American elite's willingness to finish runner-up in the Cold War. To Kissinger, the SALT and ABM treaties were a way to prevent the Soviets from continuing with their missile buildup during the years in which the United States had no new missile program in the works and was reluctant to go ahead with ABM development. To Kissinger, granting the Soviet Union due acknowledgment as a superpower with its sphere of interest went hand-in-hand with the United States acting without guilt within its own sphere of interest. That is why Kissinger, unlike many in Washington at the time, was so alarmed at the prospect of Communists coming to power in France, Italy, Portugal, or Chile. Liberals always hated this aspect of détente. Isaacson haughtily dismisses Kissinger's "tendency to see complex local struggles in an East-West context." Kissinger saw détente as a means of continuing the struggle with Communism. Détente's enthusiasts, however, saw it as a means of ending it.

Isaacson rummages around in Kissinger's intellectual past in a vain attempt to understand him. Metternich, Spengler, Bismarck, Kant are all trotted out to no particular purpose, other than to suggest that Kissinger was somehow "European" or "pessimistic" or uninterested in noble goals like human rights. Kissinger's mind is rich and complex. He never followed the fashions of the times to question the very premises of American Cold War foreign policy. But what is truly remarkable about him is his worldliness. There are many intellectuals. But few of them would have the audacity and perseverance to negotiate the most esoteric issues with the most obdurate prevaricators in the world. One need only compare Isaacson's biography with Kissinger's own memoirs to realize the extent to which Kissinger towers over his contemporaries. ❐

HITLER AND STALIN: PARALLEL LIVES

Alan Bullock

Alfred A. Knopf / 1,081 pages / $35

reviewed by JOSEPH SHATTAN

In thinking about Hitler and Stalin, perhaps the most important thing to bear in mind is that, under normal circumstances, neither man would have amounted to much. Stalin might have enjoyed a brief fling as a Caucasian bandit-chieftain; Hitler might have attained a certain notoriety in the political underworld of Central Europe. As the distinguished British historian Alan Bullock observes in his remarkable story of history's two pre-eminent geniuses of evil, "To anyone who came across either of them before the age of thirty, a suggestion that he would play a major role in twentieth century history would have appeared incredible."

Unfortunately, the times in which Stalin and Hitler came to maturity were not normal. Russia was ravaged by war and revolution, Germany by defeat and depression. And it was precisely because authority had crumbled and the future was up for grabs that misfits like Hitler and Stalin could scale the heights of power.

For Stalin, who was ten years older than Hitler, a career as a professional revolutionary seemed perfectly natural. Stalin had an intense hatred of authority, "not so much in principle," Bullock notes, "as in its exercise over him by others." Consumed by feelings of class hatred, convinced that he was destined for greatness, "Stalin emerged as a rough, coarse, difficult man whose original motivation as a revolutionary was colored far more by hatred and resentment than by idealism."

Just as he was a natural revolutionary, Stalin was a natural Bolshevik, and he came to regard the Bolshevik leader, Lenin, as a role model. As for Lenin's rivals in the Russian Social Democratic movement, the Mensheviks, Stalin's attitude is well illustrated in an address to Georgian workers that he delivered in 1905:

> Lenin is outraged that God sent him such comrades as the Mensheviks! Who are these people anyway? Martov, Dan and Axelrod are circumcised Yids. And that old woman Zasulich! Try to work with them. You can't go into a fight with them, or have a feast with them. Cowards and peddlers!

Stalin's idolization of Lenin led him to see himself—and yearn to be seen by others—as Lenin's chief lieutenant and heir-apparent. But Stalin's failure to play a significant role in the Bolshevik seizure of power in 1917 inflicted a terrible, totally unacceptable blow to his self-esteem. Bullock argues that the "trauma" of being overshadowed by Trotsky and others at the decisive moment in the party's history is a "key to the understanding of Stalin's psychological development." It led him to embark on a long and tortuous campaign to eliminate his rivals, gain control of the party, launch a "Second Revolution" against the peasantry, and thus come to be seen, finally, as Lenin's equal—his rightful heir and legitimate successor.

Like Stalin, Hitler had an exalted sense of personal destiny. A pampered child of middle-class parents, he spent his formative years as a vagabond in Vienna, where he was forced to rub shoulders with all sorts of riffraff while pursuing an imaginary career as an artist. This career came to nothing, but the Vienna years were hardly wasted. For it

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was in Vienna that Hitler finally recognized the hidden cause of both his personal plight and the plight of the German nation with which he identified so passionately: It was all a conspiracy directed by the Jews. What class was to Stalin, "race" became to Hitler: the key to unlocking the secrets of history. And once Hitler got hold of this key, he never let go. In his political testament, written in his Berlin bunker on the eve of his suicide in 1945, Hitler was still obsessed by race: "Above all," he declared, "I charge the leaders of the nation and those under them to scrupulous observance of the laws of race, to merciless opposition to the universal poisoner of all peoples, international Jewry."

Before World War I, Hitler's ravings almost certainly would have been dismissed by most Germans. But in postwar Germany, they struck a responsive chord. To be sure, Hitler was not a polished speaker. As Bullock points out, "He spoke at too great length, was often repetitive and verbose, began awkwardly and ended too abruptly. But these shortcomings mattered little beside the force and immediacy of the passions, the intensity of the hatred, fury and menace conveyed by the sound of his voice alone." By 1932, Hitler's oratory, combined with his originality in creating a movement that appealed to Germans of every class, had transformed the tiny Nazi sect into the largest party in Germany's Reichstag.

In their struggle for supreme power, both Stalin and Hitler profited from the fact that their opponents seriously underestimated them. In Stalin's case, it was his lack of theoretical sophistication, his absorption in seemingly petty personnel issues, and his skill at masking his ambitions that prevented foes like Trotsky from taking him seriously until it was too late. None of them recognized that, in Bullock's words, "Deceit and treachery were second nature to him."

If Stalin was underestimated because he concealed his personality, Hitler was underestimated because he flaunted his. Hitler's rhetorical flamboyance and histrionic style convinced many sophisticated observers that, despite his large following, he was little more than a rabble-rouser. One of these observers was the former chancellor and perennial intriguer, Franz von Papen. In 1933 Papen persuaded Germany's aging president, Paul von Hindenburg, to offer Hitler the chancellorship (Papen became vice-chancellor). When his conservative friends objected, Papen reassured them. "No danger at all," he said. "We've hired him for our act."

It took Stalin six years of maneuvering to eliminate his rivals and consolidate his leadership. Had he been interested solely in power for its own sake, Stalin's victory over left and right oppositions in 1929 would have been the moment to savor the fruits of victory. But this view of Stalin, Bullock contends, "fails to understand his need to prove himself, and to win the recognition of those he had defeated, that he was the successor and equal of Lenin."

To undo the trauma he suffered in 1917, Stalin launched what was in effect a war against 120 million peasants—depriving them of their farms, their food and their livestock, all in the name of "collectivization." This war lasted five years, and cost over 14 million lives—5 million in the Ukraine alone. But when it was all over and he had won, Stalin could plausibly claim that whereas Lenin had only carried out a political revolution, he had carried out a much more significant social and economic one. Stalin had become the co-author of the Russian Revolution.

Once chancellor, it didn't take Hitler nearly as long to consolidate his power. After only two months in office, he persuaded the right-wing majority of the Reichstag to pass the Enabling Law, which basically gave Hitler the authority to smash his opponents and establish a one-party dictatorship. When President von Hindenburg died in 1934, Hitler abolished the presidency and created his own title. Henceforth, officers, soldiers, and civil servants pledged "before God" a "personal oath" to "Adolf Hitler, the Führer of the German Reich and German People."

With his ascendancy established, Hitler's principal concern was to promote German rearmament without provoking French or British intervention. He knew that Germany would be most vulnerable in the early stages. Indeed, he even told his generals that they would soon discover whether or not France had any true statesmen. "If so," he predicted, "she will not leave us time but will attack us, presumably with eastern satellites." To forestall such an attack, Hitler camouflaged his intense rearmament campaign with an equally vigorous peace campaign. If diplomacy is the art of saying "Nice doggie, nice doggie," while searching for a stick, then Hitler proved a masterful diplomat.

By 1938, Hitler was ready to use his stick. He genuinely looked forward to a war with Czechoslovakia, and, ironically, bitterly resented Chamberlain's capitulation at the Munich Conference. In 1939, Hitler got his war; in 1940, he reached the peak of his power. France was beaten, Britain was isolated, Russia was neutralized, and a Greater Germany dominated Europe. At this point, Hitler should have stopped—but he didn't. For just as Stalin was not interested in power for its own sake, neither did Hitler regard foreign policy successes as ends in themselves. Both men viewed their stunning victories merely as springboards to realize their personal obsessions—in Stalin's case, the determination to equal, and ultimately surpass, Lenin; in Hitler's case, the dream of founding a racist slave empire in the East, providing Germany with *Lebensraum* and solving the "Jewish Question" once and for all.

Bullock writes:

> With the [June 1941] invasion of Russia, Hitler completed the departure from a nationalist program, with limited objectives, to embark on the racist-imperialist adventure with unlimited horizons, of which the extermination of the Jews was an integral part. The most likely month for this development to have crystallized in a decision is July 1941, the month during which news of the extraordinary early successes in Russia produced a mood of exaltation in Hitler in which anything appeared possible.

Of course, not everything was possible, not even for Hitler. The fact remains, however, that he came within a hair's-breadth of conquering the Soviet Union, murdering all the Jews of Europe, and making his racist fantasies come true. Why he failed, how cunningly Stalin turned Hitler's failure to Russia's advantage, and how the Grand Alliance that defeated Nazi Germany fell apart, are among the many issues illuminated by Bullock in his magnificent work. Yet when all is said and done, what the reader is left with after completing *Hitler and Stalin* is a sense of the sheer incredibleness of it all. Never have so few done so much harm to so many.

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To many Americans, alas, the subject matter of Lord Bullock's book is virtually ancient history. Now that Germany and Russia are both democracies, why dwell on the past? What difference can it make now what Hitler and Stalin thought and did during the first half of our century?

Unfortunately, it might make a greater difference than anyone realizes. For, unlikely as it seems, history could well be on the verge of repeating itself. As the lands of the former Stalinist empire lurch ever closer to the abyss, the same conditions that led to the rise of Hitler and Stalin have reappeared. Once again, we are confronted by revolutionary political upheavals, profound economic and social dislocations, implacable ethnic hatreds, nostalgia for a vanished imperial glory, and pervasive anti-Semitism. Under these circumstances, is it really too far-fetched to assume that another Hitler or Stalin is lurking in the wings, awaiting the opportunity to pounce on an unsuspecting world? If not, what are we to do about it? *This* is the great question of the hour—far more important to America's well-being than the state of the economy, the size of the deficit, or a woman's right to choose. ❐

MY LIFE IN POLITICS

Willy Brandt

Viking / 498 pages / $35

reviewed by JEFFREY GEDMIN

When Willy Brandt died of cancer at 78 at his home south of Bonn in October, the *Washington Post* hailed the former West German leader as a man of "humanistic values" who had "played a giant role in . . . ending the Cold War." *Time* said Brandt had helped "end the cold war and [brought about] the restoration of a unified Germany to the family of nations." The German press declared that a "great patriot" had been lost: "Brandt defined the political climate of our country," opined one editorial; he "initiated the process which in the end brought freedom," said another. Even the conservative daily, *Die Welt*, usually Brandt's critic, paid homage: "Germany is poorer without him." The myth of Willy Brandt is already bigger in death than it was in life.

It's true, of course, as his autobiography recounts, that Brandt was a participant in much of the great drama of this century. He fled Nazi Germany in 1933 and worked for the resistance in Scandinavia. He was mayor of West Berlin when the Communists erected their "anti-fascist defensive wall" in August 1961. A decade later, as West German chancellor, he received a Nobel Peace Prize for *Ostpolitik*, his policy of détente with the East. And when the Communists finally swapped white for red on the flagpole in 1989, *Der Spiegel* championed Brandt, then honorary chairman of the West German—and also the new East German—Social Democratic party, as the "new superstar on both sides of the shattered wall."

It's deeply ironic, though, to celebrate Brandt as the father of German unification and a mastermind behind the West's Cold War victory. It was Brandt who nudged his Social Democratic party (SPD) away from the objective of German unity that was enshrined in Bonn's constitution. In fact, Brandt once called unification "the living lie of the second German republic." It was Brandt's misguided belief that the source of East-West tensions lay in missiles, rather than in the conflict between freedom and dictatorship, that lured him toward the murky waters of moral equivalency. And it was Brandt's SPD that actively sought to legitimize East Germany's Communist rulers at the very same time Mikhail Gorbachev had begun to undermine Erich Honecker's hard-line regime.

Indeed, Brandt had been the best negotiating partner the Communists could ever have wished for. That's why Markus Wolf, East Germany's infamous espionage chief, expressed regret that the unmasking of master spy Günter Guillaume, a senior aide to Brandt, had led to Brandt's resignation as West German chancellor in 1974. That's also why former East German leader Honecker had instructed his comrades "to do everything" in their power to "avoid damaging [Brandt's] Social Democrats," as recently released party papers in east Berlin reveal. *My Life in Politics*, published first in German in 1989 on the eve of Eastern Europe's upheaval, is a richly documented exposition of Brandt's worldview.

Although he wrote a short preface to this English-language edition in September 1991, one wonders how Brandt might have edited parts of his manuscript had the book gone to press a year or two later. As it stands, the reader confronts an internationally acclaimed politician of vast experience, towering moral authority, and singularly bad judgment. In defense of a controversial meeting with Yasser Arafat in Vienna in the summer of 1979, Brandt insists that Arafat was a man "ready to negotiate peace." Years later, Brandt remained oblivious to the climate of that period. Arafat had been calling for "blood, blood, blood" in the PLO's campaign to reclaim all of Palestine. The *Economist* was reporting a "sharp rise" in PLO terrorist activities, while the Voice of Palestine openly heaped praise on the work of "Palestinian fighters . . . inside the occupied homeland." Shortly after the Brandt-Arafat Kaffeeklatsch (hosted by Austrian chancellor Bruno Kreisky) guerrillas were machine-gunning Tel Aviv's ambassador in Lisbon, and the PLO was busy again slipping bombs onto buses in Jerusalem. It's hard to follow Brandt's logic that Arafat was ready to respect "the secure existence of the State of Israel."

In 1984, after an affectionate meeting

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with the Sandinista leadership in Managua, Brandt, then president of the Socialist International, emerged ever more convinced that the new Nicaragua was on the path to a just society. "If those are Marxist Leninists," Brandt said, "then I'm an anteater." Brandt's autobiography oozes with disdain for the West's "fixation on international Communism" and its lack of understanding for "national liberation movements." His "emotional" eight-hour visit with the Sandinista comandantes was an expression of "solidarity with the peoples of Central America."

Yes, Brandt was an unrepentant anti-anti-Communist. And his unconcealed distaste for the "mental shortcuts" of the Cold Warriors, "those Americans and others who saw things in a simple light," is on abundant display here. It's hard to imagine that he himself had once believed early in his career in what he called the West's "battle against Communist inhumanity." But in *My Life in Politics*, Brandt has only disparaging words for anti-Communism, particularly the American variety:

> It would have been surprising if the missionary zeal woven into the fabric of the United States . . . had not had some startling political effects. . . . It would also have been surprising if so rich and powerful a country was not afflicted by a certain arrogance of power. American missionary spirit is seen in the long-standing tendency to divide the world into good and bad, equating Communism, or what is to be taken for Communism, with immutable evil, interpreting the idea of a free world in a characteristically American manner, promoting the American way of life even in inappropriate areas.

Brandt's great vision for the practice of foreign policy was to "aim for cooperation wherever confrontation could be avoided." This became the cornerstone of Ostpolitik—in the final analysis, the primacy of peace over freedom, or as Brandt puts it, the "subordination of ideological confrontation to the necessity of peace." Brandt and his close colleague Egon Bahr used the expression "change through rapprochement" to describe and justify their policy toward the Soviet empire, although in fact "rapprochement regardless of change" would have been appropriate.

Accommodation, appeasement, fatalism. "My Berlin experience had taught me," writes Brandt, "that there is no sense in running your head against a wall." In the fall of 1971, at the height of Brezhnev's repression—Andrei Sakharov had just fired off a letter appealing for the release of two dissidents being held in a psychiatric prison in Leningrad—Chancellor Brandt's foreign minister sanguinely declared that "structural changes inside the Soviet Union" were already providing the foundation for the further reduction of tensions between East and West. The crusade for peace at any price helped create among Ostpolitik's practitioners what Walter Laqueur called at the time the "climate of make-believe concerning Soviet intentions."

The Soviet Union's deployment in 1975 of a new medium-range missile, the SS-20, roused a few from their slumbers. In 1979, NATO, with the encouragement and support of Social Democratic chancellor Helmut Schmidt in Bonn, decided to counterdeploy American medium-range Cruise and Pershing II missiles in Western Europe and simultaneously offer arms control negotiations to Moscow. But Brandt, then chairman of the SPD, cowered. Brandt contended that "both superpowers [were] stronger than they have to be, stronger than is good for the world." Schmidt left office, and Helmut Kohl and Germany's conservatives held the line. But Brandt's Social Democrats drifted spastically. Brandt's unwillingness to center the debate on Soviet threats and coercion, his unrestrained rhetoric about "the self-annihilation of mankind," "humanity . . . arming itself to death," and the "deadly conflict" between the superpowers helped fuel the hysteria that corrupted much of the Euromissile debate in Germany and endangered implementation of NATO's "two-track" decision.

Brezhnev's propaganda machine, pleading for "sanity" to save "Europeans from a nuclear Auschwitz," had in fact inched precariously close to success. Of course, Gorbachev's signing in 1987 of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) agreement—a grudging acknowledgment of NATO's resolve—caught Brandt's camp off guard and vindicated the Cold Warriors. So, too, did the fall of East Germany and Communist Europe two years later. In 1987 Brandt had given the nod to members of his party to embark on a joint commission with East Berlin's Communists to explore "common values" between the two sides. Again, Bahr was Brandt's point man. He had already "done much," writes Brandt, "outside the framework of government routine . . . to create the climate" in which Bonn and East Berlin could work "harmoniously together."

Indeed. One Social Democrat had told his Communist counterpart in discussions, according to documents from the party archives in east Berlin, that "the entire Ostpolitik of the SPD is driven by the desire to maintain stable conditions in the socialist countries. . . . One has to do everything to see that the GDR remains the most stable." In the name of greater détente, leading SPD functionaries called for the dismantling of West Germany's "unnecessary" Salzgitter center, the station that monitored human rights violations in East Germany. They also argued that East Germans should be deprived of their right to West German citizenship. Bahr even declared discussion of German unity to be "political environmental pollution."

No wonder a stunned and confused Walter Momper, the Social Democratic mayor of West Berlin, insisted that November 9, the day the Wall collapsed, was not a day of reunification, but rather a "day of seeing each other again." Brandt was relatively quick to catch on, declaring his pro-unity slogan, "what belongs together, will grow together," by Christmas of 1989. Still, it was not an easy time for him. He had, after all, accepted the premise of Gorbachev's design—intensifying cooperation in Europe between two distinct systems, one capitalist and one socialist. There would be "differences of taste," writes Brandt, "and of the ability of the occupants of rooms in the 'common European home' to furnish them. But conflicts arising from such factors were subordinate to the law of survival."

The Cold War is over, Germany is united, and the "doves," beams *Time*'s Strobe Talbott, "were right all along." Arthur Schlesinger credits Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik: it "invigorated the forces of reason and reform within the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe." You can also credit Willy Brandt's legacy for Germany's paralysis

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on the world stage today. Remember during the Gulf crisis, the Germans finally agreed that Saddam had to be stopped—they just opposed their own involvement in Operation Desert Storm. Now as the cancerous conflict in former Yugoslavia threatens to spread in Europe's belly, the Germans have already said, if it comes to intervention, history and constitutional prohibition prevents them from sharing physical risk.

But there's far more to the story. Forty-two percent of Germans say their country has no need for a national defense. Only ten percent say they'd be willing to take up arms if their own country were attacked. This is not Germany learning the lessons of the past. This is still Willy Brandt's country, wanting to love and be loved, in a make-believe world where negotiations and freshly cut checks will make any problem go away. ❐

THE SYSTEM: AN INSIDER'S LIFE IN SOVIET POLITICS

Georgi Arbatov

Times Books / 380 pages / $25

reviewed by ARCH PUDDINGTON

Georgi Arbatov is bothered by his reputation as chief propagandist for Soviet global policies during the era of Brezhnevite decline. Though it flies in the face of the self-righteous excoriations he directed at Ronald Reagan's policies in the early 1980s, he much prefers the dual image of advocate for world peace and director of a prestigious think tank, something akin to Cyrus Vance as head of the American Enterprise Institute.

Like Vladimir Pozner, Arbatov used to appear frequently on American television, a symbol of Moscow's embrace of modern public relations. He spoke English well and displayed a certain grasp of the American political psychology. While maintaining the Soviet tradition of never admitting mistakes, he was a more reassuring presence than, say, Andrei Gromyko, the dour foreign minister whose unsmiling visage summoned up memories of Stalin, Molotov, and Vishinsky (and whom Arbatov now disparages as a coward and a toady).

Furthermore, Arbatov bore the credentials of director of the Institute for the Study of the USA and Canada, and thus qualified as the Soviet Union's leading expert on the United States. In *The System*, Arbatov writes with pride of his institute's role in educating the insular and "semi-educated" Kremlin leadership about realities of life and politics in America and elsewhere. He can barely conceal his disdain for Brezhnev and associates.

What he doesn't admit is that he rose to prominence by doing the bidding of this crude and narrow-minded group, and there is no reason to believe that he ever put forward anything less than full effort on the regime's behalf. He was not just a propagandist, but an architect of a strategy to appeal over the heads of Western governments, and especially the Reagan Administration, to sway potentially sympathetic constituencies: the peace movement, European social democrats, and journalists and academics of a détentist inclination. When Ted Turner or John Kenneth Galbraith would return from Moscow whining about how Reagan hawks were undermining the doves in the Kremlin, it was safe to assume that the source for this "insight" was Arbatov or a subordinate at his institute.

Arbatov is the consummate cynic, a man who privately gave out hints that he shared Western democratic values while publicly advancing the cause of a thoroughly loathsome system. Arbatov, however, pleads guilty only to what he calls "conformism," which seems to mean having to say certain things as a "condition of survival" in the treacherous world of Soviet politics. His culpability, he adds, is mitigated by the lies higher-ups told him about such issues as the Kremlin's crash civil defense program (which Arbatov implausibly claims to have known nothing about), and by a personal code of honor that would not allow him to denounce associates fallen from grace or to defend the Soviet Union's more obviously criminal acts.

Yet even today Arbatov can't come entirely clean. He asserts, for instance, that he refused to defend Soviet aggression in Czechoslovakia and Afghanistan, a claim directly contradicted by Arbatov's previous writings. Not only did Arbatov defend both actions, his arguments were indistinguishable from those advanced by Brezhnev, Suslov, Chernenko, and the rest of the Politburo's primitives. In a volume written by Arbatov entitled *The War of Ideas in Contemporary International Relations*, published in the early 1970s, he crowed that the "imperial bourgeoisie" had been thwarted in its attempt to "wrest Czechoslovakia away from the socialist camp," and he trumpeted the "fraternal internationalist assistance" that the Warsaw Pact troops had rendered in 1968. Designed as a guide to those engaged in ideological work, the volume reminded the *aktiv* that détente, then in full bloom, did not signal the end of the international class struggle. The book was replete with the rankest kind of Commie-speak, phrases like "the expansionist aspirations of the leading imperialist powers," "rule of the monopoly bourgeoisie," and "imperialist vultures." It even advanced the notion that "imperialism" encouraged drug use to divert people's attention from the ideological struggle and claimed that nuclear war "remains an intrinsic component of imperialist foreign policy."

Arbatov defended the Afghanistan war in another book, *The Soviet Viewpoint*, published in the West in the early 1980s. For some reason, he remains extravagantly proud of this work, calling it "exceptional for its great frankness and self-criticism," and for its "higher-than-usual level of skill, professionalism, and argumentation." Yet his defense of

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Soviet policies hardly differed in its essentials from the Brezhnev line. Moscow had sent a "military contingent" to its neighbor "to help the government formed after the revolution . . . ward off aggression from the outside," acted only "after repeated requests by the Kabul government," and did nothing in violation of international law.

Some might think it unsporting to torment self-professed closet reformers like Arbatov by reminding the world of what they said in the bad old days before glasnost. After all, it's widely understood that a measure of dishonesty could not be avoided in the Soviet system, and even a stalwart supporter of perestroika like Alexander Yakovlev found it expedient to write things that today he would gratefully consign to the incinerator.

But where does expediency end and career advancement take over? Arbatov claims that behind the scenes he worked for peace, mutual understanding, and common sense. Yet this champion of détente was also perfectly willing to call America the most malign power on earth, or justify the persecution of dissidents, or defend the arming of Third World thugs, or blame the West for encouraging the movement for Jewish emigration.

Although describing himself as a partisan of democratic socialism, Arbatov no longer has much good to say about the old domestic order (unlike Mikhail Gorbachev and other prominent "reform Communists"). He provides some useful insights about the functioning of the system and especially about such shadowy Kremlin figures as Yuri Andropov, the late KGB chief and party secretary. To be sure, Arbatov speaks with respect of the man who brought him into the apparatus's higher ranks by naming him to the Central Committee staff during the regime of Nikita Khrushchev. And while he describes Andropov as incorruptible, this portrait does not correspond to the "godfather of perestroika" image that gained widespread circulation in the West. Arbatov laments Andropov's leading the KGB during the era of re-Stalinization (unfortunately, without providing details), and is particularly critical of Andropov's prominent role in several of the Soviet Union's major foreign policy blunders. Andropov was an enthusiastic supporter of the deployment of the SS-20 missiles in Eastern Europe, a measure that had the unforeseen effect of cementing the Atlantic Alliance at a time when dividing Europe from America was a principal goal of Soviet policy. Arbatov also blames Andropov, along with Defense Minister Dmitri Ustinov, as principally responsible for the invasion of Afghanistan.

There are also worthwhile descriptions of the operation of the propaganda-cum-censorship apparatus. For instance, the memoirs of Marshal Zhukov, the World War II hero, were rewritten to delete any reference to Stalin's purge of the Red Army High Command. Arbatov chillingly recounts how he himself was humiliated by the Red Army brass for voicing mild criticisms of some of the more blatant falsifications in a history of the Great Patriotic War. Would that there had been more material of this sort and less typically overblown Soviet rhetoric about peace and the fate of mankind and Arbatov's service on the Palme Commission on nuclear disarmament.

One also wishes he had elaborated on his views of America. Clearly, his grasp of the realities of American politics was distorted not simply by the limitations imposed by the Soviet political environment, but also by Arbatov's self-image as a man of the international left. His recourse to phrases like "extreme right" and "military-industrial complex" seem out of place in the post-Cold War era, and suggest a genuine lack of understanding of the popular basis of anti-Communism. He is not, of course, alone in this failure; much the same charge could be leveled against the Western politicians and businessmen who served as Arbatov's informants about life in the real world. Arbatov's description of West German neutralist Egon Bahr as "one of the most outstanding political minds of our time" suggests that one reason the Soviets never understood America is that much of their information about America was provided by Westerners harboring strongly anti-American views.

The System has been awarded generally favorable reviews, not surprising given Arbatov's friendship with some of the reviewers. Few have seen fit to puzzle out the breathtaking flexibility Arbatov has exhibited while serving under such diverse leaders as Leonid Brezhnev, Mikhail Gorbachev, and Boris Yeltsin. They prefer to see Arbatov as an honest man doing his part in a dishonest system. Which is precisely as Arbatov would want it. ❐

AMERICAN ENERGIES: ESSAYS ON FICTION

Sven Birkerts

William Morrow / 413 pages / $25

reviewed by M. D. CARNEGIE

In 1919, roughly a decade past the month she affixed as the moment the human character changed, Virginia Woolf published her essay "Modern Fiction," in which she averred that fiction writers, long hemmed in by the trivial stuff of the material, now stood before a horizon of limitless possibility: the human mind. She had been reading *Ulysses*, which was then appearing in installments in the *Little Review*. She found it wanting, and wondered rhetorically if it were not so that "in any effort of such originality it is much easier, for contemporaries especially, to feel what it lacks than to name what it gives." Nevertheless she marked what she had seen of it as cause to wax sanguine about the future of the novel, which now had the potential to be a total document of consciousness—to unwind the scroll of memory, to catch the sounds of time's pass. "Record the atoms as they fall upon the mind," Woolf exhorted her colleagues:

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> "The proper stuff of fiction" does not exist. Everything is the proper stuff of fiction,every feeling, every thought; every quality of brain and spirit is drawn upon; no perception comes amiss. And if we can imagine the art of fiction come alive and standing in our midst, she would undoubtedly bid us break her and bully her, as well as honour and love her, for so her youth is renewed and her sovereignty assured.

It is not only at three-quarters of a century's distance that the rhetoric seems hypertrophied. T.S. Eliot believed the novel had died with Flaubert and Henry James, and said so. Ortega y Gasset maintained that the genre's subject matter had been mined well beyond the point of fruitful yield. As the novelty of earlier subjects diminished, readers' tastes grew more rarefied: there was an ineluctable evolution toward audience boredom and implacability. It was not for nothing, Ortega quipped, that the novel was called "novel."

In his first book, *An Artificial Wilderness* (1987), Sven Birkerts maintained that, contrary to the coroner's reports, fiction was alive and well and living in—well, living virtually everywhere except the United States. Literature worthy of the name was still being forged abroad, emanating from "cultures that feel, or have recently felt, the sharp pressure of history." Birkerts held that writers little-known in this country—like Thomas Bernhard and Michel Tournier—were crafting solid works from the old materials and on the grand themes: want, terror, the ubiquity of evil. In contradistinction to their gravity, the native product was so much unbearable lightness: John Barth was a purveyor of "self-consuming metafiction," Raymond Carver of a "numb affectlessness," Mailer and Capote of "docu-fiction."

American Energies is a less satisfying collection, not least because, as the title implies, Birkerts attempts a volte-face. After having given us, in *An Artificial Wilderness*, a rough map of the world's literature on which his countrymen populated only the narrowest and most desolate islands, he is hard pressed to convince that the recent years of our nation's fictioneering are indicative of anything remotely like "energy." (If Barth and Mailer are ultimately disappointing, what's to be made of J. California Cooper?) The preface tries bravely to patch over the inconsistencies—Birkerts tells us the manuscript was for a time called "The Death of the American Novel"—but apostasy is likely as not to be an embarrassing spectacle, and by the end of it we find ourselves reading that the present book is best thought of not as a diptych, but as a funnel. The moment, shall we say, is Spinal Tap–ean.

In "Backgrounds," the book's first section, the twaddle becomes a source of real irony. For just as Birkerts forsakes the metaphor of the diptych for the funnel, or the artistic for the merely utilitarian, he begins this collection of essays on fiction with a group of pieces on non-fiction. It is a mistake. Birkerts's obvious knack for tracing the veins of the essential in a novel stalls in the three-dimensional world, and at times he keels over into puffery and bathos. Bill McKibben's *The End of Nature* is an elegy for "everyone." *USA Today*, as if life imitated art theory, is upgraded from newspaper to "postmodern collage of the world." And in a review of Terry Teachout's *Beyond the Boom*, Birkerts seems to find no evidence that a group of young conservatives might perchance be exercising proper, or even independent, judgment:

> Was the Aquarian project of social liberation—misguided as it was in some ways—so offensive, so terrifying to the generation just coming up? If so, then we older boomers ended up destroying our deepest ideals. We chased away all spirit, spontaneity, enthusiasm, and experiment, and left in our wake a new way of being young—a way that formerly belonged just to the embittered old.

Lament for the Aquarian informs the book's second section and center of gravity, "American Fiction." Here Birkerts dives into the fray surrounding the novel's future and emerges somewhat wet. Two major essays use as a springboard Tom Wolfe's broadside, "Stalking the Billion-Footed Beast: A Literary Manifesto for the New Social Novel." Wolfe, like his homophonous colleague in the department of manifesto, is wise to the game of self-declaration. We find him advocating a new kind of novel much like the kind of novel he has recently penned. The essay, published in *Harper's* a couple of years ago and oft-

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discussed since, chastised writers for leaving reality to the journalists and rebutted recent laments, like Philip Roth's, that the real world had become hyperreal, daily discharging in the news figures that dwarf those born of the novelistic imagination. Nonsense, cried Wolfe, the world of the real was ready and waiting to be novelized, if only there could be mustered sufficient notebook-toting Zolas for the task.

Birkerts disagrees, in part because he believes Roth's claim extends beyond the extraordinary characters in the news to include a "shattering of the context that might explain them":

> The real has become surreal. Some bonding element in the social order has crumbled away, shivering our picture of public life into fragments. Watergate long ago proved that the social contract was a tissue of lies and evasions, and that government ran on fear and self-interest; assassinations pointed to the retributive violence alive in the American heart. All heroism leaked out of political life, and with it all confidence in solid goals and purposes. The strain of counter-culture solidarity that had run through the liberal-democratic part of the culture gave way to narcissistic self-protection.

Literary criticism has become surreal, perhaps, when the Trickster is held culpable for the crappy novels coming over the transom.

As is often the case in the compassionate soul, individual failures of achievement are blamed on everyone and everything but the individual. Instead of bad novelists we have bad conditions for the novel. It is not a document of reality we need, Birkerts avers, but rather novels that have in their vision a loss of confidence in reality, the vague dread he believes endemic to our age. He adjudges only Pynchon, DeLillo, and Robert Stone as successes in this regard, because they are "paranoids" who have rendered the modern American soul in chiaroscuro. The future of the novel rests in uncovering "the black hole at the heart of the contemporary."

When he trades the spray-paint can of manifesto for the ball-point of reflection, however, Birkerts is one of the better critics. His genealogy of the larger trends may be a little screwy, but his readings of particular books and authors rarely err, and the essays in the book's final section, "American Writers," display the crisp style that made the first collection such a pleasure.

Birkerts's sense of the state of modern fiction is nowhere more evident than in his decision to end the book with a piece on David Foster Wallace. Wallace, let me proclaim in the spirit of manifesto, is by quite a long chalk the finest writer under 30 in the nation. His work is Woolf's map of the subjective submerged in Wolfe's external reality. It is without paranoia; it simply exists in the benumbed realm of the audiovisual, and is at once hilarious and disturbing as hell. Wallace's selection as final author in the book hints that Birkerts may recognize that he is wrong about his own prescriptions to restore American fiction to vitality. As Birkerts writes, "Wallace's stories are as startling and barometrically accurate as anything in recent decades . . . [he] is, for better or worse, the savvy and watchful voice of the *now*." He goes on:

> Between Wolfe and Wallace, we find ourselves in a strange bind. If fiction is to win and hold a readership, it will probably have to move Wolfe's way. But the new social novel does not hold much of the truth about the changed conditions of our subjective lives . . . the man—or woman—hunched over coffee in the mall. . . . Where shall we get the picture of who we are?

One hopes Sven Birkerts will use his talents to address this question thoroughly, and this question only, next time around. ❐

POPULISM AND ELITISM: POLITICS IN THE AGE OF EQUALITY

Jeffrey Bell

Regnery Gateway / 190 pages / $21.95

reviewed by WILLIAM TUCKER

This is a book that I have been looking forward to reading for years. For at a time when it has become possible to talk about a universal sociology, social scientists are mired in the past, still thinking in terms of "class conflict" between rich and poor. Academia trudges on, assembling the evidence of how business elites "exploit the masses"—without ever addressing the fact that they themselves are a rival elite, trying to work out their own system of exploitation.

Jeffrey Bell gives us a completely different paradigm: of history as a chess game between "the people" and various elites. The vast majority of people embody a common sense that makes self-government possible, while elite opinion has quirky desires and values that rarely coincide with those of the majority. Thus, politics becomes the competition among elites to conform most closely to mainstream opinion. In the end, says Bell, populism always wins, but only after detours and derailments.

Until the American revolution, elites ruled everywhere through force or fear, perpetuating themselves through various rules of succession. Today, no group can rule a nation without presenting at least the *pretext* that their actions reflect the "will of the people." Yet because democracy operates almost everywhere through representative government, the people must choose members of one or another elite to lead them. Only Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who wanted the whole world to be split into self-sufficient cantons, was willing to confront

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the consequences of direct democracy.

Those in power are always falling behind the times, while simultaneously trying to institutionalize their own position. In America, for example, the House of Representatives—intended to be the branch of government closest to the people—has become the branch of permanent power. The presidency—intended to be remote from the people—has become the real medium for change.

Intellectuals, always a formidable elite, vie for power as fiercely as generals, businessmen, and politicians, and in contemporary American politics, the Democratic party has become the party of the upper-middle-class intelligentsia. Thirty years ago, this same party was an alliance between the working class, the poor, and the "Solid South." Since 1968, however, the party has been successfully invaded by a university- and government-based professoriate. (At the 1992 convention, there were more delegates with *graduate* degrees than with undergraduate degrees only.)

The professional classes were indeed once conservative and Republican: in 1948, Thomas Dewey was the candidate of the Eastern Establishment, and in 1960 Richard Nixon outpolled John Kennedy on Ivy League campuses. But today the teachers' unions and the Association of Trial Lawyers of America prevail. (As Bell notes, it is the Democrats' stronghold in the professional classes that enables them to field a stronger line-up of candidates. Democratic lawyers, professors, and teachers' union representatives are always far more appealing and articulate than the entrepreneurial clodhoppers and Christian fundamentalists who represent the Republicans.)

Although the Republicans were slow to seize the opportunity, they finally came crashing through in 1980 with the election of Ronald Reagan. The result, as Bell notes, was the most purely populist presidency since Andrew Jackson. Like Jackson, Reagan came to office with a program for limiting government and liberating the forces of enterprise. Like Jackson, Reagan was rejected by Congress and condemned by the Eastern elite. And just as Jackson passed the torch to Martin Van Buren, Reagan left his legacy in the hands of another Eastern protégé, who quickly dissipated it. On an optimistic note, Jackson's economic plan was eventually accepted by both parties with the election of James Polk in 1844.

Populism and Elitism has its flaws, particularly the two-chapter rehearsal of every twist and turn on the American political scene since 1968. And there are a couple of problems that go unaddressed: First, how deeply has democracy really penetrated the rest of the world, even in countries where regular elections have been established? Second, isn't it possible that, as America becomes more affluent, elite opinion could expand to become the mainstream itself? A recent Gallup poll, for example, reported that 57 percent of Americans claim they would sacrifice jobs and prosperity to "preserve the environment." Although such casual expressions of support are always suspect (they probably aren't talking about their own jobs), it is not at all inconceivable that elite attitudes—a rejection of economic progress, the casual acceptance of sexual experimentation, a covert admiration for criminals—could become widespread.

Still, the basic point remains clear. The Democratic party has become the repository of elite opinion, for the most part at variance with the mainstream. Although the media produce a steady drumbeat of criticism that Republican positions on issues such as crime and taxes are "unpopular," popular opinion remains unconvinced.

Even so, armed with Bell's analysis, it is easy to see why the Republican ascendancy finally collapsed in 1992. "The setting of society's standards is, in the final analysis, what politics is about," says Bell. Having taken on the trappings of an isolated elite themselves, the Republicans simply forgot to present an agenda, relying instead on past success. Victory in the Cold War only means that people will want to move on to the next problem—as well they should. ❐

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IMPOSTORS IN THE TEMPLE: THE DECLINE OF THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

Martin Anderson

Simon & Schuster / 448 pages / $22

THE IDEA OF THE UNIVERSITY: A REEXAMINATION

Jaroslav Pelikan

Yale University Press / 238 pages / $30

reviewed by D. G. MYERS

Too much has already been said about the present crisis in the university, and these books say even more. Yet they (and the subject itself) have a claim on conservatives' attention. As Martin Anderson warns, "To a very large extent—some 60 percent worth—you are watching your tax dollars at work when you look at today's public universities."

More than financial self-interest, though, ought to alarm us. Outside of soccer, as Jaroslav Pelikan observes, the university may be the largest man-made institution in the world. It has become a vested interest, a massive international bureaucracy more worried about clutching its privileges than educating young minds or promoting the cause of truth. And like most bureaucracies, the university is not staffed by the very best people available. As Pelikan says, quoting another recent writer, "Just as the modern university has no time for the most important human subjects, it has, ironically, no place on its faculty for the brightest people." More than one onlooker has suggested that the quickest solution to the crisis of the university might be to hire better professors.

In recent years, only criticism by outsiders has contributed to an intelligent appreciation of the university. One thinks of Charles Sykes's *ProfScam* (1988), Roger Kimball's *Tenured Radicals* (1990), Dinesh D'Souza's *Illiberal Education* (1991). And though the loudest blast issued from the interior, Allan Bloom found himself treated like a stranger after writing *The Closing of the American Mind* (1987). Earlier, quieter inquiries by university men—such as Michael Oakeshott's essays written from 1948 to 1972 and collected as *The Voice of Liberal Learning* (1989), Robert Nisbet's *The Degradation of Academic Dogma* (1971), and Kenneth Minogue's *The Concept of a University* (1973)—were largely ignored (evidently even by such readers as Pelikan, who neglects to mention them in his otherwise useful guide to the mounting literature on the subject).

Both Anderson and Pelikan know the inner workings of universities, and both are conservative—though the similarities pretty much stop there. Anderson, 56, is an economic conservative and was an adviser to Presidents Nixon and Reagan. A former business school professor who earned a Ph.D. in industrial management from MIT and has been associated with the Hoover Institution at Stanford for two decades, Anderson is at home in the university without feeling sentimentally attached to it. *Impostors in the Temple,* his sixth book, can be thought of as a consultant's report on the business practices of universities, from the treatment of their customers (the students) and the economic viability of their leading product (research) to the responsibility of their directors (the board of trustees).

Pelikan, 68, is a cultural conservative and a lifelong academic who earned his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago at 23, and now is Sterling Professor of History at Yale, where he has held an endowed chair for thirty years. Best known as a religious historian, he has written twenty-five books, including a five-volume history of Christian doctrine. Although scornful of those (like Jerry Herron in *Universities and the Myth of Cultural Decline)* who smugly quack that the university is not in trouble, Pelikan is also suspicious of calls for root-and-branch change, "as though we in the present generation were free to define the university in any way we wish without attention to its heritage." For Pelikan—the insider—the chief enemy of the university is outside the gates.

Anderson argues that today's universities lack integrity. Trivialization of research, abuse of tenure, abandonment of teaching, grade inflation, exploitation of graduate assistants, the fraudulence of college sports—one by one Anderson shows how the activities of a university have been corrupted by the reluctance of professors and administrators to be honest about this state of affairs. "They begin by lying to others," Anderson says, "and end by lying to themselves."

Political correctness is not the issue. It *is* a scandal, of course. Not only does it discourage the independence of mind upon which genuine scholarship depends; it also leads to "one-party rule" in everything from admissions to hiring and promotion. Naturally enough, professors and administrators deny that it exists. (As if in a hurry to confirm Anderson's analysis, a gang of left-wing academics including Stanley Fish, Jonathan Culler, and Henry Louis Gates, Jr. recently organized Teachers for a Democratic Culture, for the purpose of disputing the existence of left-wing gangs within the university.) Anderson is baffled by this refusal to acknowledge the obvious. To the extent that political correctness and a one-party rule dominate the university, he says, "we have unprofessional conduct on the part of professors and administrators." It is

D.G. Myers teaches at Texas A&M and contributes to The American Spectator, Commentary, *and the* New Criterion.

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admirable of him—also a bit naive—to think that many of these people will be troubled by an accusation of unprofessional conduct.

If the political corruption of the university is merely the public face of a deeper collapse of integrity, the cause has to be found in something more important to professors even than left-wing politics. Anderson locates the real source of the university's distress in its adoration of research. It is the highest value in universities today, amounting very nearly to a form of worship. "Publish or perish" is a misnomer. It's not publication as such that counts, but a fastidious *ceremony* of publication—dressed up with learning, citation and reference, a collective response of formula expressions, in journals that are "refereed" (i.e., closely monitored) by higher-ups. As Anderson points out, this is a system guaranteed to result in the neglect of teaching and the publication of trivial, irrelevant work.

And yet it is teaching, not research, that is the main reason for the existence of colleges and universities. For him, the prototype of an academic intellectual is Milton Friedman. "Beyond his brilliant mind and his influential research and writing," he says, "[Friedman] has a natural instinct for teaching. He teaches naturally, all the time, whether in front of a lecture hall or in personal conversation. He loves the play of ideas, loves challenging people, making them think, pursuing the truth wherever it leads." Few professors have Friedman's brilliance of mind; most are incapable of his research and writing; many even lack his natural instinct for teaching. But if, as Anderson shows, they are also missing his *willingness* to teach, they have no business in a university.

Pelikan would agree that universities exist to pursue truth and challenge people to think. But this, he might add, isn't the *best* that universities can do; it is the *most* they are capable of. Although universities are founded upon the principle that knowledge is an end in itself, that truth ought to be chased down at any price, this (he says) describes the outer limits of what anyone can legitimately demand from them.

As suggested by his title and invocation of the principle that knowledge is its own end, Pelikan's book is a dialogue with John Henry Newman, author of "the most important treatise on the idea of the university ever written in any language." It is not finding fault to say that Pelikan discovers little in Newman to differ with. His objective is to focus attention on what Newman had to say, and to provoke reflection on its enduring aptness.

But while Newman was responding to the utilitarian assault on the classical curriculum at Oxford, Pelikan defends the university against a loose confederation of new utilitarians representing the interests of social reconstruction, "who claim to speak on behalf of 'the real world.'" He indiscriminately numbers Sykes, Kimball, D'Souza, and Bloom among these claimants; he would probably lump Anderson with them too. But the real antagonists of the university are *not* its honest critics. Pelikan himself echoes Anderson in saying that any candid discussion of scholarly research must begin with the acknowledgment that far too much of it is trivial and irrelevant. No, the real antagonists of the university are those who loudly deny the principle that the pursuit of truth (including the criticism of universities) is an end in itself, requiring no apology.

Elsewhere in his book Pelikan himself argues as much. The university, he maintains, quoting Hannah Arendt, is a refuge from "a world that does not even know what a man is talking about if he takes the word truth in his mouth." At its best, his updated *Idea of the University* is a grave meditation on the significance of that principle. Unlike Anderson, and despite his qualms about it, Pelikan holds out for the view that research is central to the work of a university. As he puts it, a scholar is someone who has dedicated his life to the acquisition of knowledge, which entails a moral obligation to communicate what he has learned. Research is simply the discharge of this obligation.

This is persuasive coming from someone like Pelikan, whose books communicate a deep sense of moral purpose. But it barely applies to most of the research extruded from universities, which seems less dedicated to communicating anything at all than it is to preserving the mysteries of scholarship from the scrutiny of mere readers. Although Pelikan insists that the university is founded upon the pursuit of knowledge, like many university men he doggedly slips the question: Knowledge of what? If it is knowledge of the human experience that we are talking about, then research is not the only way—perhaps not even the best way—to pursue it.

As Martin Anderson has clearly shown, to expect original research from what is by and large a class of merely well-educated teachers is to create the conditions for a breakdown of integrity. There simply are not enough true researchers to staff all the universities and colleges now in existence in America, unless we pretend that what is trivial and irrelevant is really original.

As Jaroslav Pelikan argues, professors have a moral obligation to communicate the knowledge they have painfully acquired. But what are the grounds for insisting that they do so only through scholarly publication? Scholarship is one kind of knowledge; but there are others, and among them are teaching and writing for those outside the privileged caste. If the university stands for knowledge and the handing on of knowledge, it will have room for these other activities. On the evidence of these two books, though, the university is coming to stand merely for research by an elite convinced of its own irreplaceable value. No one is obliged to share this belief, however. And that is what the present crisis is largely about. ❐

EDITORIALS

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solutions to America's public problems. He is for economic growth, crime prevention, and dozens of other good things. He claims to understand the latest developments in public policy and to have broken with "the old Democratic Party." His problem is that, though he might have the mind of a think-tank whiz kid, he seems to have the emotions of a flower child. Worse, the hierarchy of his party still includes every New Age zany, and thousands of unrepentant Carterites. These people learned nothing from the 1980s. There was once another bright Southern governor who came to Washington talking out of both sides of his mouth. Possibly Jimmy Carter was as different from the liberal establishment as he said, but a Democrat has to recruit someone to run his government and the results can be amusing. ❐

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CORRESPONDENCE
(continued from page 12)

identical moral foundation. This view, moreover, is shared in full by Judge Robert Bork, who has written that "Our constitutional liberties arose out of historical experience. . . . They do not rest upon any general theory."

It is easy to see that Rehnquist's and Bork's rejection of any constitutional standing to natural rights or natural law is a direct inheritance from John C. Calhoun. When they speak of "original intent," it is Calhoun's version, not Jefferson's or Madison's or Lincoln's.

Their jurisprudence represents a much more complete rejection of the Founding principles than does Justice Brennan's. The latter at least sees the original principles as evolving. The former do not see them as ever having been there at all.

—Harry V. Jaffa
Professor Emeritus
Claremont McKenna College and
Claremont Graduate School
Senior Fellow, the Claremont Institute
Claremont, California

Peter L. Welsh replies:

I now know firsthand what William F. Buckley, Jr. meant when he said, "If you think Harry Jaffa is hard to argue with, try agreeing with him!"

I never asserted that Calhoun affirmed the truth of the Founders' declaration "All men are created equal," nor did I assert that Calhoun affirmed the constitutional status of the Declaration. What I did say was that Calhoun *interpreted* the Declaration as Lincoln did. Jaffa cites a passage from the Speech on the Oregon Bill (June 27, 1848) that exhibits Calhoun "taking Jefferson's words in an utterly mistaken sense." However, in the same speech, as Jaffa knows, Calhoun demonstrates that he understood nearly full well, at least in principle, what was meant by the Declaration's "All men are created equal" clause. According to Calhoun, Jefferson took

> an utterly false view of the subordinate relation of the black to the white race in the South, and [held] in consequence, that the former, though utterly unqualified to possess liberty, were as fully entitled to both liberty and equality as the latter; and that to deprive them of it was unjust and immoral.

On the second question, I did not attempt to defend the contempt certain conservative scholars have exhibited toward the natural law principles underlying the Constitution. Nevertheless, if Jaffa doubts that there exists a contempt for such principles at least equally severe on the part of liberals, I need only refer him to the latest public consideration of natural law, the Clarence Thomas confirmation hearings. Irrespective of the contempt for natural law, however, my point was that the liberal jurisprudes, unlike their conservative counterparts, contemn the notion of an enduring meaning to the various provisions of the Constitution and that this latter contempt necessarily undermines the rule of law.

Air Bag

"Clean Air's Dirty Politics" (by Robert J. Ernst III, *TAS*, October 1992) mentions the South Coast Air Quality Management District. Unfortunately, within that mention, the facts are untrue. The article states that the AQMD has banned bakeries, destroyed L.A.'s furniture industry, and has cost residents billions in revenue.

Unlike the smog-free days enjoyed in Salinas, residents living and working in the L.A. basin breathe the dirtiest air in the nation. Air pollution decreases our children's lung capacity up to 15 percent; it scars our lungs and worsens the condition of those suffering with serious respiratory diseases. True, it will cost each resident to clean the air—less than a dollar a day. But the daily return of $1.10 to each investor, compounded by the benefits that simply can't be quantified—improved health and clean, clear skies—are worth the investment.

There is a very big job to do here if we want to breathe clean air. But the AQMD is not so one-sided in its commitment that it is insensitive to the recession's impacts on Southern California's businesses.

The rules established to reduce pollutants emitted from furniture manufacturers, commercial bakeries, and other businesses are strict—they have to be, given our situation—but they are not created to drive hard-working citizens out of business, or Los Angeles. They are part of the AQMD's overall plan to make life better for everyone. Without clean air rules, our pollution would rival Mexico City and Santiago, Chile, where the economy shut down recently to prevent widespread poisoning from pollution. Instead, with clean air rules, the basin is breathing the cleanest air on record. AQMD employees are out in the field helping the business community understand and comply with the rules. We are educating business owners and offering them free, on-site consultation services. In-house we are streamlining paperwork requirements to speed up permit processing for new or expanding firms. AQMD has also set up a loan guaranty program to assist small business owners with the purchase and installation of air pollution control equipment.

Rule 1153, which regulates bakery emissions, affects only the large, commercial wholesale bakeries; local grocery stores and neighborhood retail bakeries are exempt. The Southern California Baker's Air Quality Association worked closely with AQMD in developing the rule and area bakers have willingly worked to comply. But our collaborative efforts haven't stopped with the rule.

Food-4-Less Bakery, of La Habra, California, and the AQMD are conducting a pilot study of a new air pollution control system called biofiltration. The system, now used successfully in Europe, will be a cost-effective and environmentally safe means of reducing emissions.

While a handful of furniture manufacturers have left the L.A. area—up to 3 percent between 1988 and 1990, according to the United States General Accounting Office's study—the majority have stayed. Those manufacturers surveyed stated "high costs for worker's compensation insurance and wages" as the most significant factor in the companies' decisions to relocate to Mexico or other parts of the U.S.

Don Kush, owner of a furniture manufacturing company, once questioned his ability to comply with AQMD's regulations and considered relocating his business to Mexico. He now credits the AQMD with helping to keep his business in the L.A. area. AQMD staff members worked with him to resolve his problem; and their cooperative efforts not only kept the 13-year-old business in the area, but made it possible for Kushwood Manufacturing to expand. Kush's expanded operation in Orange County will employ up to thirty workers.

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In a partnership project, the California Furniture Manufacturer's Association, Southern California Edison, and the AQMD are working to develop low volatile organic compound furniture coatings that will rival today's commercial coatings. To date, the team has identified several hybrid coatings that—coupled with new application technology—would emit few or no VOCs and exceed conventional coating's performance standards.

These examples prove AQMD's commitment to protecting both the economic and the natural environments of this region.

—Dr. Margil W. Wadley
Methods Research Manager
South Coast Air Quality
Management District
Diamond Bar, California

Robert J. Ernst III replies:
Years ago the SCAQMD made its deal with major polluters. Now it has only small businesses and housewives to regulate, the same parties to whom it should have been offering market incentives to discourage pollution twenty years ago. Working people care about environmental quality when they draw honest paychecks. If the SCAQMD were accountable to those it supposedly protects, it would not offer disingenuous propaganda about improving public health by killing jobs.

The SCAQMD and the other air districts are sensitive to some businesses, usually the biggest ones, which can afford expensive air district permits. The SCAQMD conducts warrantless searches of unfriendly businesses. It has gone so far as to place levies on small business payroll accounts for malfunctioning laser printer ozone filters, while trees contribute much of the ozone in the South Coast basin. Air conditioning shops must jump through SCAQMD hoops, while volcanoes put tons of ozone depleters into the stratosphere. Why didn't the SCAQMD save the furniture industry when it had the chance?

Salinas's McCormick-Schilling spice plant and Soledad's Redwood Empire sawmill were blasted for putting, respectively, spice vapors and sawdust into the air. The sawmill left Soledad, and left ninety people jobless; we still enjoy the scent of cinnamon. The electric companies pay hundreds of millions to the air districts; only electric cars qualify for low emission registration credits. The air districts should not target bakeries when there are no trains to ride.

Thanks to agencies like the SCAQMD, the only real growth industries from Los Angeles to Soledad are looting and bureaucracy. I stand by my theme: California regional air agencies exist to subvert local government in the name of no-growth environmentalism and New Age public health.

Rubout
Edward Conlon's "Mob Stories" (TAS, November 1992) is an excellent read, but I'm curious that his only mention of Little Italies comes in an aside concerning their "disappearance."

A few years back, I, a former Webster Avenue Bronx boy, took a car tour with an old crony (residing then in Queens, since decamped to Florida) from 149th and Melrose due north to Webster Avenue and Fordham Road, the area unseen by me for perhaps four decades. *Appalled* is the best word I can come up with for the experience.

Mind-boggled, however, best describes my reintroduction to our ultimate destination, the Bronx's Little Italy, centering on Arthur Avenue, and a meeting with an old friend, Frankie, whom I had not seen since 1945. Frankie, a retired streetcar motorman and bus driver, lives with his wife in the same apartment they first rented in 1941, in a clean, decent, and obviously safe building. He showed us around the old neighborhood, with its vibrant street life, luscious fruit stands, wonderful bakeries, and, most importantly, a sense of community and safety, an enclave among near-ruins not far away in any direction. Even the place where I had my first pizza at age eight still functions under its old name, although considerably gussied up from sixty years ago.

The begged question, of course, is how this microcosm of The Bronx I knew as a kid still exists, and it is quite easy for me to credit *fanoosh*. This word for The Mob appeared some years ago in the *New York Daily News*, in a column under the byline of Bill Reel; I have never heard it before or since. The gist of Reel's writing was that safety and stability for ordinary citizens in such neighborhoods as those defined by Arthur Avenue was the provenance of *fanoosh*. I'm interested in hearing the opinion of current Bronx denizen Edward Conlon.

—Robert J. Powers, Col., USAF (Ret.)
Shreveport, Louisiana

The Rushians Are Coming
I would like to respond to Tom Frangicetto's letter in the November issue *re* Rush Limbaugh.

I have only listened to Rush since this past August, originally only to keep my husband up to date, as his job had taken him to Oman, where Rush has never been heard (but ought to be).

All I could think through the weeks I listened to him was, *My God, I'm not the only one!* At first I only believed Amway distributors thought like I did. Now I realize there are millions of us. Millions of people who are tired of liberals harassing anyone who believes in morality, faith in God, and protecting our children from drugs and pornography.

Anyone who says he's a liar has never heard the man speak or read his book, or is just jealous of his popularity and is talking sour grapes. The reason the man is popular is that he doesn't lie, that the truth rings like a crystal bell in a sea of brass bells. We all knew the media was lying to us, but we were so busy trying to protect our loved ones that no one was out there checking this garbage out until Rush Limbaugh came along. He must wear out multitudes of rubber gloves sifting through this garbage in the media, but I and millions of other people are grateful he voluntarily took the job.

—Carol Chilson
Fairfield, California

Tom Frangicetto must be the dumbest reader of *The American Spectator*, judging from his frenetic and irrational letter.

He may not like Rush Limbaugh, but he can't hide from the fact that liberalism is the direct cause of nearly all of the nation's major problems . . . deficit spending, the welfare state, taxes, regulations, pornography, AIDS . . . and yes, the liberal policies that have stalled the economy.

If Frangicetto doesn't win title to "dumbest" he certainly qualifies as the champion name-caller. In five paragraphs of copy he managed eleven of them . . . without ever once touching upon a substantive issue. What gall!

—S. Rayburn Watkins
Louisville, Kentucky

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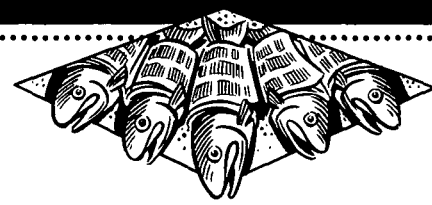

International Herald Tribune

A dubious pitch for funds from 52,000 members of the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations:

An open letter to the Fifth Committee of the UN General Assembly

If the UN went on strike, the world would be in a fix. People would freeze and starve and suffer. Refugees would be lost with no one to help them. Pregnant women all over the world would be deprived of pre-natal care. Millions of children would not be vaccinated and become ill. And many people would die. . . .

The world without the UN sounds terrible, doesn't it?

[November 6, 1992]

New York Times

Stalin called them "wreckers." Columnist Leslie H. Gelb calls them "poisoners." Stalin had them tortured, shot, or exiled. Mr. Gelb only calls for knee-capping—typical liberal half-measures:

Republicans are already undermining Bill Clinton with foreign diplomats and businessmen—just as they did to Jimmy Carter with crippling effect, after the Nixon and Ford Administrations.

The hits come from former officials who have worked intimately with foreigners in 20 of the last 24 years and have gained their trust. The underminers include the likes of Henry Kissinger, former top Reagan-Bush national security aides and conservative legislators.

Their message is everywhere the same: This Governor of a small Southern state is dangerously inexperienced in world politics, as was Jimmy Carter. He is being surrounded by naïve Carterite liberals and Democratic neo-isolationists. And with only 43 percent of the popular vote, Bill Clinton has no mandate.

If the President-elect is to avoid being weakened even before he steps into the Oval Office, he had better cut off the poisoners at the knees now. He must send out the word that he knows who they are—and that he will settle accounts soon.

[November 8, 1992]

Los Angeles Daily News

In faraway California, another oaf deluded by the Wonders of Education myth:

Genethia Hayes says she recently learned firsthand the importance of getting a good education—when her car was stolen.

Hayes, assistant executive director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, found her car gone as she left her South-Central Los Angeles office to attend a special Los Angeles Board of Education meeting.

Other car theft victims might be understandably angry at the thieves, but Hayes said that whoever took her car was also a victim.

"On a personal level, I know that person now driving my car on a road to crime had an inadequate educational background," Hayes said, after getting a ride to school district headquarters.

[September 20, 1992]

L.A. Style

Susan Estrich is a law school professor at USC, Michael Dukakis's erstwhile campaign manager, and, as you can see from what follows, a self-confessed dunce:

My commitment to public education is not entirely a product of my own experience. I went to public school in Boston and, at least from the sixth grade on, I hated it. I was the valedictorian of my class, and the winner of the French award, but I can barely speak a word of French, never had an advanced-placement course (none were offered except in science), never wrote a real research paper, and learned almost nothing about world history. I dropped off the math team in junior high because it wasn't something girls did; when I quit, there weren't any girls at all. My greatest accomplishment in high school was learning to twirl a baton and do splits in the mud at football games in the hopes that people would forget that I was a smart girl. I certainly didn't look smart, particularly when the mud turned to ice and snow in November. Given the choice, I would have loved to go to private school.

[September 1992]

New York Times

Another bizarre communiqué from Academe, published as a public service on the correspondence page of New York's incomparable *Times*:

Most successful female candidates have been involved in politics even while they were still menstruating. —*Stephanie Riger*
Prof. of Psychology, U. of Illinois Chicago

[November 1, 1992]

Boston Globe

A dangerous crank loosed by the incomparable *Globe*:

As an educator and clinician in the field of adoption psychology and most of all as an adoptee, I was appalled by your Oct. 8 Living/Arts article titled "Families: Made in China." This is one of the most racist and cavalier ways to talk about a baby, a couple and a family, and it further demeans the culture of this child and, now, her family.

Adoption can be a wonderful way to create a family when family preservation (a child is kept by his/her birth parents, extended family or culture) is not an option. Adoption is, however, an experience that holds a great deal of loss for the birth family, the adoptee and the adoptive family. There is the pain of infertility and the pain of disconnection that must remain a reality for families made through adoption. When the adoption is crosscultural, there are even greater identity issues—especially for the child, but also for the family that is now biracial.

To use the term "made in China," which has many connotations—"merchandise purchased," "quickly and poorly made" and "goods imported"—is racist and totally insensitive to James Braude and Kristine Rondeau, and especially to this small human being, Lily Mi, who is not an object, an import or merchandise made quickly and inexpensively. She is a real and beautiful person, and she and her family deserve more than this flippant headline.

—*Joyce Maguire Pavan*
Somerville

[October 22, 1992]

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Mentor

In *Mentor*, the cleverly named organ that bills itself as "a magazine for men interested in hearing about their gender and sharing their discoveries with other men," irrefragable proof that men can equal feminists in all the realms of banality, stupidity, and tedious esotery:

We have to look at our lostness to be on the road to our answers. This means going back to recover the rainbow of feelings in our autobiography. We are taught to live in our heads, to oversee and be planners. Shake that and start to work in our hearts and our souls. When we go through the work, we will reach the full range of feelings. We, as men, need to grieve for ourselves and then understand. The goal of life is to become wise and compassionate.

[Fall 1992]

The Tennessean

Dr. Frank Ritter, a leading Nashville *philosophe*, exposes Ellen Goodman's despicable sciolism with scholarship of the top chop:

A lot you see written these days in response to Madonna's new book, *Sex*, is uninformed criticism of someone not really known, despite her notoriety. Last Tuesday, for example, on *The Tennessean*'s op-ed page, syndicated columnist Ellen Goodman managed to both mischaracterize and misquote Madonna, all in the same paragraph.

In her documentary *Truth or Dare*, Madonna did not—as Goodman contends—blurt out "in banal outrage" to a question by her father about whether "she should cool the masturbation number": "I have to protect my artistic integrity!"

Her father never mentioned masturbation; nor did Madonna in that conversation. What happened was that Madonna was telling her father he might not want to attend her show two nights in a row because "it's pretty racy in some sections."

The father replies, "Oh, s--t! You're getting racy on me, huh?"

Madonna: "Dad! I'm not *getting* racy—I've *been* racy."

Dad: "Well, could you tone it down?"

Madonna: "For you?"

Dad: "Yeah."

Madonna (very calmly, and not in "outrage"): "No, because that would be compromising my artistic integrity."

Dad: "Of course! Do you undress in this performance?"

Madonna (in outrage): "*No!* Of *course* I don't!"

[November 1, 1992]

New Yorker

A little balmy historical revision is practiced by a properly anonymous editorialist upon the genius President who in the year 1979 saw Iran fall to the Ayatollah and the Soviet Union slip into Afghanistan, Cambodia, Grenada, and Nicaragua:

Mr. Clinton could easily make the case that Jimmy Carter, the personification of weakness in the Republican demonology, fenced with the Soviet Union more effectively than any other President in the past twenty years. After the embarrassing spectacle of the refusal of the Ford White House to permit a visit from Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, for fear of offending the Kremlin, Mr. Carter made human rights a centerpiece of his foreign policy.

[November 2, 1992]

San Francisco Chronicle

The culmination of a life of scholarly research, deposited on the correspondence page of a monument of the American journalistic industry:

Many Republicans have been critical of liberals and what they call the liberal media. If they would even consult a dictionary or encyclopedia they would find that the definition would include such words as: generous, open-handed, possessing a free and generous heart, unprejudiced, broad-minded, bountiful, appropriate or fitting for an enlightened mind, free from narrowness, bigotry, or bondage to authority. It is an attitude of optimism, of hope, it is a belief in toleration, it desires freedom, liberty and the equality of men.

Or maybe they do know what the word "liberal" means and that is why they do not like liberals.

—*James Demulling*
Miranda (Humboldt County)
[October 28, 1992]

New York Times Book Review

In a laid-back review of a new history of left-wing radicalism, Professor Michael Kazin displays the kind of insouciance toward murder we wish he and his friends would display toward capital punishment:

There are events in the life of every political movement that appear to prove its critics' worst charges. For the radical opponents of the war in Vietnam, such an event was the bombing of Sterling Hall, a large brick building in the middle of the sprawling campus of the University of Wisconsin in Madison. The massive explosion early in the morning of Aug. 24, 1970, accidentally killed one man (a theoretical physicist named Robert Fassnacht) who was doing research in the basement, injured several others and caused over $6 million of property damage. . . .

Tom Bates's *Rads* tries to make sense of what in retrospect seems an act of political idiocy and self-destruction. Mr. Bates—a journalist, most recently with the *Los Angles Times Magazine*, who attended the University of Wisconsin in the late 1960s—embeds his conclusions in a lucid, dramatic narrative that avoids taking sides. Although his "heart remains with those who tried to stop the war in Vietnam," he dispenses empathy on both the amateurish bombers (who called themselves the New Year's Gang) and the zealous police officers, FBI men and prosecutors who took several years to track them down. Mr. Bates, unlike most who write nonfiction about the radicals of the 1960s, cares less about coming to judgment than about mining the lode of extraordinary tales the decade produced.

[November 1, 1992]

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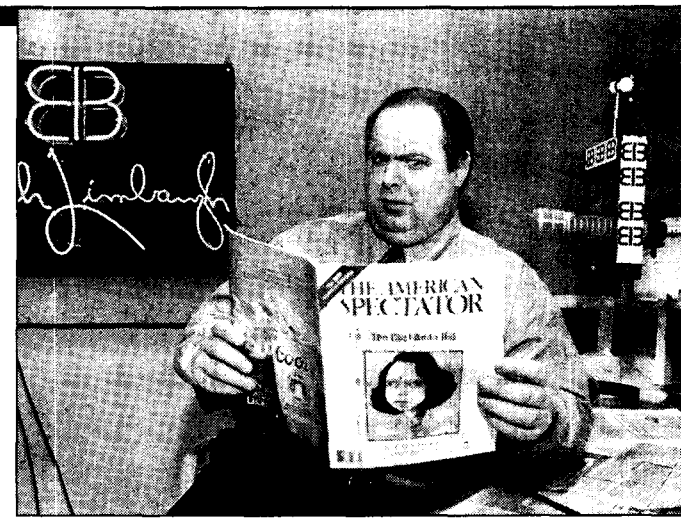

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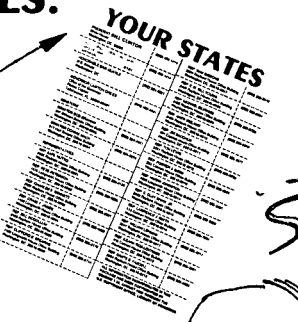

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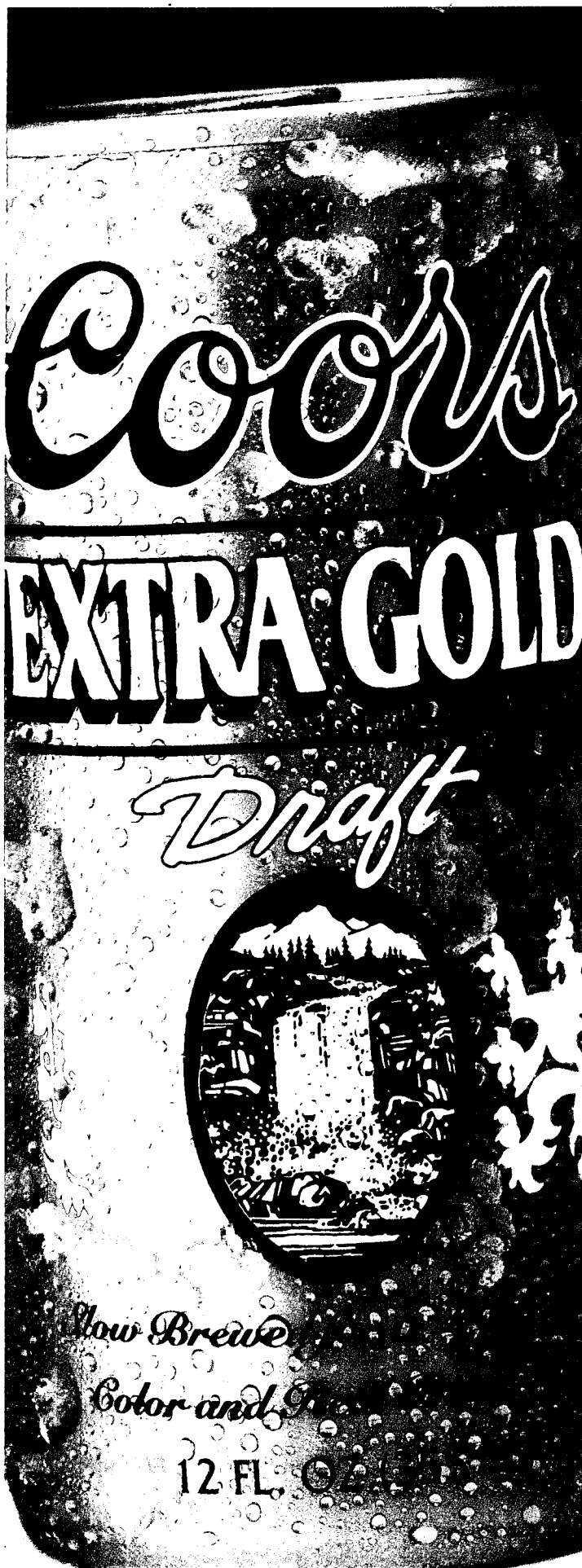

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